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ABSTRACT

This research report examines the school and home experiences of the black inner-city kindergarten, first, and second grade child. A team of researchers observed the homes and classrooms of selected children over a three-year period in four schools in a midwestern city in the United States. All of the children, teachers, and staff in these schools were black. For comparison, two white middle-class schools and one white working-class urban school were also studied. The primary method used was systematic non-participant observation. In all, more than 306 classroom observations were made--242 in black classrooms and 64 in white--each observational period being approximately ninety minutes. There were 180 home visits of 28 families. Supplementary data include interviews with teachers, principals, staff personnel, superintendents, and members of the school board; observations of teachers' meeting and parent teacher association meetings; informal conversations with teachers, principals, and children; and, materials such as report cards, classroom work, displays, office memos, children's drawings, public reports on the school system, and the like. By documenting the processes by which educational failure is assured for many children, it is hoped that points of possible change will be suggested to reduce the casualties. [This document is marginally legible when reproduced, due to the quality of print of the original.] (Author/JM)

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THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION OF THE BLACK CHILD IN THE CITY

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With the assistance of John Bennett, Marshall Durbin,
Ray C. Rist and Carol Talbert
(Former Principal Investigator: Jules Henry)

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Appendis: Ray C. Rist, Jr., "The Socialization of the Ghetto Child into the Urban School System," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Washington University, June 1970. Submitted under separate cover to the Office of Education.

Acknowledgements

This project was initiated at the request of the Office of Education by Jules Henry, late Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Washington University. Professor Henry conducted all phases of the project during the first nine months until he was incapacitated by illness. Professor Henry died in September, 1969. Professor Henry's work and the debt of this report to him is documented in the following pages.

David J. Pittman, Director, Social Science Institute and Professor of Sociology served as Principal Investigator during 1968, with John Bennett, Professor of Anthropology and Irving L. Horowitz, Professor of Sociology (all of Washington University) as Assistant Principal Investigators. The research could not have been continued had it not been for their willingness to assume these responsibilities. The project owes much to their consultation and guidance of the research assistants.

Helen P. Gouldner, Professor of Sociology, Washington University, was appointed Principal Investigator in 1969 and with Professor Bennett, who continued as Assistant Principal Investigator, served until the project's termination in January, 1971. Professor Bennett played a major role in guiding the research and an even more important one in assuring its continuity. Marshall Durbin, Professor of Anthropology, Washington University, served as consultant to the project in 1970: he worked closely with several of the research assistants, provided guidance in the preliminary linguistic studies, and contributed the section of the present report entitled "An Essay on Black American English."

The following graduate students served as research assistants for varying lengths of time on the project: Glen Akers, Jeffrey Gilbert, Steven Jones, Marco Pardi, Ray C. Rist, Patricia Roberts, Mark Schoepfle, Thomas Shapiro, Carol Talbert, and Bruce Zelkovitz.

The research owes a very special debt to these graduate students. Their research tasks were extraordinarily difficult and this difficulty was compounded by the necessarily frequent changes in personnel not only among the directors of the project but, largely because of the military draft, among the assistants themselves. There were occasions in which the students had to be more or less "on their own" and they continued their work in a highly professional and competent manner. Particular thanks are due Mrs. Carol Talbert who served on the project all three years. While continuing her research, Mrs. Talbert helped to maintain continuity during the various periods of transition--training and orienting new research asistants, organizing seminars, and writing a number of papers which she delivered at various national meetings. The research of Mrs. Talbert and of Dr. Ray C.

Rist, who completed his Ph.D. dissertation while on the project, have contributed heavily to this final report.

Mrs. Isabel Blase served as executive secretary and, as with others, helped greatly in providing continuity during the various periods of transition. I would like to add a personal note of thanks to Mrs. Alaine Arndt for her generous contributions of ideas, criticisms, and alternative interpretations.

Helen P. Gouldner
Principal Investigator

Section 1: Summary

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION OF THE BLACK CHILD IN THE CITY

Some children succeed in black ghetto schools and many children fail. This research reports on both the successes and the failures, detailing the school and home experiences of black kindergarten, first and second grade children. We have learned something about the lives of these children--about their teachers, their classrooms, their classmates, their schools, and their homes--which helps to explain the many failures and the few successes.

During the course of this research it became clear that the schools can only be understood as a direct reflection of the social, economic and political realities of American society. Basic changes in the schools will be impossible without ramifying changes in the larger system. However, there is room for maneuver. Even within the present system, it is possible to make the schools more flexible and less damaging. By documenting the processes by which educational failure is assured for many children we hope to detail points of possible change that will reduce the casualties.

Collection of data

A team of researchers observed the homes and classrooms of selected children over a three year period in four schools in a midwestern city in the United States. All of the children, teachers and staff in these schools were black. For comparison, two white "middle-class" suburban schools and one white "working-class" urban school were also studied. While various methods were used throughout the research, they were largely supplements to the primary method of systematic non-participant observation. In all, more than 306 classroom observations were made--242 in black classrooms and 64 in white--each observational period being approximately one and one-half hours. There were 180 home visits of 28 families. Supplementary data include interviews with teachers, principals, staff personnel, superintendents and members of the school board; observations of teachers' meetings and PTA meetings, informal conversations with teachers and principals and children; and materials such as report cards, classroom work, displays, office memos, children's drawings, public reports on the school system, etc.

Findings

An ideology of failure permeated the school system we studied. The personnel believed that no matter how well the students were taught many were potential failures. As a consequence, and in contrast to the suburban "middle-class" white schools, where teachers assumed that all the children would "make it", the teachers in the ghetto schools judged the potential success or failure of their students very early in the kindergarten year. Children selected as "doing well" and as potential successes were cleaner, wore better clothes, came from families economically "better off", were more frequently girls, and showed, according to the teachers, the ability and willingness to follow directions and greater verbal skills than those selected as "doing poorly". Verbal skills were critical, especially the ability of the child to "code-switch" between Black American English and Standard American English.

The teachers selections were not made on the basis of formal testing. We believe that the teachers based their decisions on a number of behavioral traits which they assumed to be predictive of "success". While we are not able to precisely identify all of these traits they appear to fall into three categories. (1) those indicating that the child, according to the teacher, is "teachable" or can learn, such as verbal skills and following directions, (2) those indicating that the child can adapt to bureaucratic school norms, such as being quiet, disciplined, neat, and orderly; and (3) those indicating that the child might achieve middle class goals, particularly those related to upward mobility, such as being from economically "better" homes, being submissive and polite, and being able to defer gratifications.

All of the teachers' developed some form of "track" system on the basis of their choices. Once a child was labeled by the teacher as belonging in a "low" or "high" group he tended to stay there, not only throughout the school year but in at least one case through kindergarten, first and second grade. The teacher interacted not only much more frequently with students in "high" than in the "low" groups but differentially--giving more supportive behavior to the "high" groups and more control behavior to the "low". In almost all the classrooms observed, the teachers made the lessons revolve around a very few students, concentrating largely on students who could give the correct answers.

Students labeled as doing poorly tended to withdraw to the periphery of class activities and often suffered ridicule and belittlement not only from the teachers but from their classmates, particularly from those in the "high" group. They tended to "tune out" a great deal of the time and learned to tolerate hours of unending boredom. Sullen, actively hostile, passive or disinterested they did worse and worse as the months progressed. Some, it is true, had fun with each other in the back of the room or on the edge of the class when gathering together for group activities. But for most self doubt and low self esteem made them fearful to put forth the increasingly difficult effort to catch up. It is then that the teacher often interpreted their behavior according to the initial definition: "it just appears that some can do it and some cannot."

Once defined as doing poorly, a child received less attention and affection from the teacher, participated less in class activities, and subsequently failed to live up to the academic standard of the class. The poor record and teacher gossip preceeded him into the next class and the next. The labels persisted because they became more and more real. The child believed them and teachers believed them. Failure for many becomes a certainty and the child is less and less responsive to school as the years go by, eventually becoming peripheral to the school scene entirely. Given this process, it is our belief that many children do not "drop out" of school: they are pushed out. The failure of the ghetto schools is, in part, a clear example of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

The ghetto schools we observed were highly authoritarian and bureaucratic. The emphasis in the schools and in the classroom was above all on order, on predictability, on quiet, on following orders, on discipline and control. The teachers defined the ideal learning situation as a quiet, orderly classroom, where no one speaks without permission and interaction is only between teacher and pupil. The "good" class had children who had learned to sit quietly at their desks, who raised their hands before talking, who waited for the bell, who could stand in line with their partners, and who could repress expressions of anger, frustration, shame or exuberance. The teacher who ran a "taut ship" was respected by both colleagues and the principal and indeed, given the fact that good teaching is so difficult to evaluate, a teacher seemed to be often judged more in the role of a policeman than by any other standard. Discipline was often enforced by some form of physical punishment. While disruptive behavior, as defined by the teacher, did occur the dominant characteristic of the classrooms was overt docility.

Another pervasive set of beliefs in these schools is related to upward mobility. The teachers and staff believed in and tried to pass on to the children something very close to the following: that upward mobility or entry into mainstream America was a good thing to strive for, that it was possible in this society, and that the rewards were largely material--money, a "nice home", living in a "nice" neighborhood, and other life styles. These "middle-class" beliefs were directly expressed by the teachers, reflected in display materials, in reading materials, in classroom discussions, and in the songs that were learned and sung. All of the teachers and children were black; almost all of the materials were white. "Blackness" was rarely displayed and almost never discussed.

The ideology of failure, the track systems, the very clear operation of the self-fulfilling prophecy, the authoritarian, bureaucratic, and white "middle-class" orientations of the black ghetto schools we studied all contributed to the failure of many of the children. There were, however, two specific factors that played a role for some children--the use of Black American English and language socialization or "language diet."

Our preliminary studies indicated, as have others, that Black American English has a distinct structure and grammar. Both black children and black teachers frequently used Black American English, although the use among the teachers tended to be limited to non-academic, casual contexts. Many of the children had difficulty learning Standard American English, or "textbook" language, and the ability to "code-switch" between Black American and Standard American English was more characteristic of children placed in "high" groups than in "low." The teachers had some difficulty helping the child make the transition to Standard American English and in some cases separating the behavior of the black child from the language of the black child. The teachers rarely recognized the distinctive grammar of Black American English and had a strong prejudice against Black American English speakers.

More importantly, our studies, again preliminary, suggest that many black children are socialized into the use of language and other skills somewhat differently than many "middle-class" white children. Many black children tend to interact verbally more with siblings and peers than with adults: they tend to be listeners rather than participants in adult interaction. While children are privy to the continual exchange of information between adults concerning problems, aspirations, and often feelings and comments about the child himself, knowledge, skills and techniques of adapting tended to be discovered and passed down more through siblings and peers than through adults. The child learns from adults through exposure rather than through direct and elaborate explanations.

The schools, however, tend to be modeled after the more "middle-class" language acquisition patterns in which the parent often assumes the role of the "teacher" and is concerned with "explaining" things to the child. The teachers as well as the parent "lectures" and asks children direct questions and gives direct explanations. This, we would hold, makes it easier for white "middle-class" children to adapt to the American school system since it is a direct continuation of prior learning experiences: for many black children it represents an interruption of prior socialization patterns. Thus, one important problem which confronts black children is a communication problem, not just a language problem--a problem in which not only the structure of language but the use of language is unfamiliar.

Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations with the insistence that the central problems of ghetto schools, or any other schools, cannot be solved until the problems of race, of economic and political inequities, of run-away technology, and over-bureaucratization are solved. Nevertheless, we can reduce the number of failures, we can temper the damage to self-esteem, and we can make the schools less miserable places for five, six and seven year old children to spend their days.

1. Children will fail in school as long as the schools expect them to fail. It is imperative that the vicious self-fulfilling

prophecy be stopped and the pervasive ideology of failure be changed. A massive educational program directed toward school personnel and teachers which clearly demonstrates those specific conditions, among them the expectation of success, that assure the same proportion of success or failure among black children as anyone else might temper the ideology of failure. This could involve a highly publicized and widely distributed brochure outlining some of the factors that make a difference in the success and failure of black children, as well as a series of demonstration projects utilizing a wide variety of situations, teaching and learning methods, and curriculum devices.

2. We would suggest that teachers (both black and white) of black children receive instruction in the grammar and semantics of Black American English and that a handbook be written describing black grammar and its functional equivalents in Standard American English. This would, among other things, assist the teacher in helping the child make the transition to Standard American English. We would also recommend the increased use of aural instructional modes (conversation, tape, audio-visual teaching) and encourage free expression in the child's own narrative syntax and thus capitalize on the rich aural tradition among blacks. We strongly recommend the use of narrative folk reading materials. It is important that the educational system accept the existence of both grammars while concentrating on helping the child master the language of the "majority."

3. Those who design curricula should attend more closely to the different patterns of language socialization or "language diet" many black children bring with them to the classroom. We recommend the use of older children teaching younger children, more co-operative learning or group teaching rather than only the traditional drill and recitation techniques, and the utilization of various types of "paraprofessionals" in the classroom on a volunteer or part time basis. In regard to the latter we strongly urge the use of black (or white) men.

4. Our most basic recommendation is that the schools be modeled after the new English primary schools and become more "open" or "informal". We assume that children not only want to learn and will learn and that learning is likely to be most effective if it grows out of what interests the learner, rather than what interests the teacher. Although such reform necessitates a vast rehauling of our educational system, there are limited changes that can be initiated in schools almost immediately. These include the following:

a. Give the teachers more autonomy in their classrooms: teachers should be free to try a variety of educational materials and methods. If some methods don't work, the teacher should be allowed to try others. If some educational materials don't work, the teacher should be allowed to try others. Given this freedom, the teacher should then be hired and promoted and fired on how well they teach--not on how well they discipline, not on how well they attend to bureaucratic details (which should in any event be taken care of by clerks), and not on how many years of schooling they have completed.

b. Place less emphasis on discipline and control and more emphasis on providing children with a much greater variety of activities and curricula: it is not unreasonable to assume that discipline is less of a problem when children are actively engaged in educational activities of intrinsic interest and conversely that discipline may be a problem when children are bored and glued to their seats. Much of the teacher's energy is now directed toward discipline and control. If this considerable energy were focused on develcping and guiding the children through a broader spectrum of learning materials the difficulties created by the "disrupter", the "trouble maker", the "non-participant", the "withdrawn" and other assorted "problem" children would be diminished.

c. Give more individual attention to children and their differing rates and patterns of learning: this means, in part, that teachers must learn and be free to use a much greater variety of skills. Such skills must include teaching children the teacher regards as "unteachable". Many of the children we observed were not learning because no effort was made to teach them and, indeed, there were few attempts to even look for a way to teach them.

This means, that many kinds of activities will be going in the classroom at the same time. This would be possible, even in large classrooms, if these activities were of interest to the children and would be especially possible if the teacher had the aid of older children and the help of paraprofessionals.

d. "Open-up" the classroom: tear down some walls, combine some classes, allow access to libraries and other facilities, paint the rooms in bright colors, allow more freedom of movement, tolerate noise, and above all, take the school out of the classroom and into the community. Many urban schools have the city as their one advantage: frequent exploration of the varieties of institutions and businesses that are close at hand are "learning" experiences in their own right and can easily be related to more formal classroom activities.

e. Capitalize on blackness: the same old white "middle-class" "Dick and Jane" variety of books, classroom discussions and display materials were pervasive in the all black schools we studied. It does not seem particularly innovative to suggest that the black "world" be reflected in the books the children read, the songs they sing, the things they look at, and in the topic they talk about. There should be no fear of materials related to black history, black consciousness, white and black racism, social classes, or to any of the things that are an intimate part of ghetto black children's lives.

The black teachers cannot help but be one model of "being black" to the black child. We would urge black teachers to be particularly alert to, and aware of, the possibilities of their own class biases and racial prejudices. Not without appreciating their own struggles, we would hope they might be more sensitive, more accepting, and especially more loving of the children. It was black teachers, not white, who helped perpetuate the self-fulfilling prophecy of failure we observed. Beleaguered now, as all teachers are, in the current game of "get the teacher," it is not easy to suggest to black teachers that they may be faulted, in part, for the terrible failures of the ghetto schools. Granted the oppressive and authoritarian bureaucracies of the schools, granted the slim autonomy of the teachers, and granted the lack of support from the home, there is still no good reason why many children should be early programmed for certain failure by their teachers.

Section 2: Introduction and Research Design

The following report is based on a three year study of black kindergarten, first and second grade children in a midwestern city in the United States. A team of researchers observed the homes and classrooms of children in four schools in the city and, for comparison, two white "middle-class" suburban schools, and one white "working-class" urban school. A critical aspect of the research is the nature of the differences between children termed "High" achievers and those termed "Low" achievers by their teachers.

The initial purpose of this project was

> to study the learning experiences of selected children in home, school and peer cultures over a three year period, starting in kindergarten and going through the first grade. The objective is to concentrate on the experiences of particular children, to elucidate their lives, to account for their particular success or failure in school. We want to know why particular ghetto children succeed or fail in school. It is clear . . . that the poor are not a homogeneous population, and that therefore neither can they be homogeneous in success or failure nor in the factors that play upon them and determine whether the children shall succeed or fail.[1]

Research centered upon the problems of man in urban environments have long extolled education as the promising road out of the ghetto and into mainstream America. As this research has developed, and as statistics continue to indicate that youth are not accepting education (as indicated by high rates of illiteracy, failures and large numbers of drop-outs) and are choosing other values and life styles besides those of white working and middle class America, two major perspectives on the problem have emerged.

One perspective might be called, after Kenneth Clark. "the cult of cultural deprivation."[2] This perspective, until recently the most dominant, tends to locate "the problem in the child himself and asks how the child can be changed to fit the school's definition of achievement, instead of asking how the school must change to serve the child."[3] It focuses on the characteristics of ghetto children--the background, preparation, attitudes, and cognitive abilities they bring to school. The most general assumption is that cognitive growth, perceptual ability and linguistic skills have been hampered in a culturally deprived environment of ghetto homes and neighborhood.

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[1] Jules Henry, "Proposal for Research Submitted to the U. S. Commissioner of Education for Support Through Authorization of the Bureau of Research," April, 1966, p. 1.

[2] Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 129ff.

More recently a somewhat different perspective has emerged. This focus, while not denying the impact of some extra-school factors, shifts to the schools themselves. Emphasis here is placed on the lack of adaptability and flexibility in the organizational structure of the ghetto schools, on the attitudes of the teachers, and the notion that the school must be held accountable for the failure to educate ghetto children. Pearl notes for example that "It is important to examine the attributes of schooling which could conceivably be driving youth out of education."[4] And again, others have noted that it seems reasonable to assume that the failures of many ghetto children are the result of their teachers' attitudes and behavior toward them". Hentoff shares this perspective with some vigor:

> There is very little hope [of "saving" ghetto children in school] unless the ghetto communities themselves throughout the country demand that the schools be made more accountable to them. That if teachers and principals fail to educate, they be removed. That the weight of the blame be taken off the kids and placed where it belongs--on the schools.[5] (Underlining added)

The focus of this report is also on the schools. We will, as others have been, be highly critical of the schools and their staffs, particularly of the authoritarian bureaucratic structure. But, as we hope to make clear, we insist the schools can only be understood as a direct reflection of the social, economic and political realities of American society. What, for example, would be the economic consequences if the "lower class" schools were, indeed, "successful" and turned out the same proportion of well trained college-bound young people that come from more "middle class" schools rather than janitors, pump jockeys, waiters, domestic workers, and welfare recipients? The now popular game of "get the schools", and the even more popular one of "get the teacher" does little more than add another set of scapegoats to account for the continuing inequities in the American stratification system.

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[3] Vera P. John, "The Intellectual Development of Slum Children: Some Preliminary Findings," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXXIII (1963), and Martin Deutsch, "The Role of Social Class in Language Development and Cognition," prepared for the Institute for Developmental Studies, Department of Psychiatry, New York Medical College, (April 1964).

[4] Arthur Pearl, "Schools Versus Kids," pp. 161-173, in Irwin Deutscher and Elizabeth J. Thompson (Eds.), Among the People: Encounters with the Poor, Basic Books, Inc., (1968), p. 162.

[5] Nat Hentoff, "The Mystery That Isn't: How Do You Get Those Slum Savages to Learn?" Evergreen, XIII (May 1968), p. 41.

But even as we came to believe in the course of this research that basic changes in the schools will be extraordinarily difficult without ramifying changes in the larger society, we also came to believe that there is room for manuever. Even within the present system, it is possible to make the schools more flexible and less damaging. In documenting the process-day by day, month by month, year by year--by which educational failure is assured for many children we hope to be able to detail, in concrete terms, points of possible change that will reduce the casualties.

The Research Design

Various research methods were used throughout the lifetime of the project, but largely as supplements to the primary method of "naturalistic observation". How this method was actually implemented is detailed below. It is important, however, to note here the more general conception of this method so that the findings may be more adequately evaluated.

Professor Jules Henry, the initial principal investigator of the project, designed the research along the lines he had formerly utilized in his studies of families, schools, and homes for the aged. This work is best documented in his Culture Against Man.[6] It involves a highly personalized conception of research, one in which the investigator spends a great deal of time observing subjects in their "natural habitat" without participating in ongoing activities. Professor Henry's use of the method of "naturalistic observation" or non-participant observation in this project involved sending researchers into classrooms and homes with instructions to observe and note as much as possible about the situation but, as described below, with some focus on aspects of the situation that Professor Henry thought critical, for example, interaction between the child and the teacher. He believed, also, in working very closely with the researchers--constantly reviewing their protocols and discussing their reactions, feelings, perceptions and intuitions.

This method, as used by Henry, departs sharply from the more traditional methods of collecting data. It does not involve the development of specific hypotheses--although instructions to the researchers as to "what to look for" surely suggest there were implicit hypotheses--or the collection of structured data to test these hypotheses. Rather, its claim to scientific validity depends on the collection of great quantities of data by well trained and sensitive observers and the subsequent interpretation of these data by, in Professor Henry's case, of a scholar with great insight and the ability to manage masses of qualitative data.

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[6] Random House, (1963).

The latter point is critical. This method, as it was personalized by Henry depends heavily on the interpretive abilities of one person. In the case at hand it means that it is very likely that this report is not one that Professor Henry would have written. Rather it represents a compromise between the direction of the research begun by Professor Henry and the subsequent interests and skills of the staff that took over during his illness and subsequent death. The debt of this report to Professor Henry is no where more keenly felt than in our certainty that there were more things to be seen than we saw and that, with his skills, Professor Henry would have seen these things.

As initially designed by Professor Henry, it was intended that the study would develop in several phases: Phase 1, Step 1: observation of Negro kindergartens; Phase 1, Step 2: selection of particular children for observation; Phase 1, Step 3: concentration of observation, in kindergarten, of selected children; Phase 1, Step 4: observation of the children in their homes; and in Phase 1, Step 5, observation in the peer group. In Phase 2, to begin in the second year, the same children were to be observed in the same situations, in the first grade. Phase 3 was to be a study of the "school culture".

In a very general sense, the project followed this three year model. As is often the case, however, different foci than had been anticipated emerged out of the ongoing research itself. Thus, for example, the felt need for comparative data led to some observations of suburban "middle-class" schools and to one "working-class" school. Some emphasis was also placed on a general study of the structure, philosophy and problems of the school system. Further, several linguistic sub-studies were initiated including the use of Black American English in classroom teaching and research on lexical differentiation between kindergarten children and 6th and 8th graders.

School Observations

The bulk of the data collected by the project staff is from four different schools in one school district in a midwestern city school system. These four schools, attended entirely by black children, were, after considerable consultation, assigned to the project by the Director of Instruction in the city school system. There is no evidence that these schools were in any way atypical of black schools in the school system, except, according to the Director of Instruction, they were "less studied than others". We noted, however, that many of the teachers preferred a position in one of these schools to an assignment further "downtown" in housing project schools. As noted, additional data were gathered in two upper "middle-class" suburban elementary schools and one working-class urban school.

Researchers observed a kindergarten class in their assigned schools twice a week during the first several months of data gathering. Each class visit was one and one-half hours. Although researchers noted as much as possible about the class during these sessions, the primary focus was teacher-child interaction. Stress was placed on noting verbatim, using handwritten notation, every statement of both the teacher and the child--especially the teacher's instructions for a lesson, how the boys and girls responded to such directions, and how the teacher reacted to the responses. The researchers noted correct and incorrect student responses and how they were dealt with by the teacher. In reporting teacher actions, researchers paid attention to the teacher's mobility, facial gestures and tone of voice in an effort to describe the context of classroom relationships and to uncover "double messages" from the teacher--where speech and action differ in meaning. It was assumed that the teacher's actions usually carried negative or positive valence for the child and that it was possible to code and count such actions.

Researchers were instructed to note the overall behavior of the class at least once every fifteen minutes during the observation period. They took an overall scan, recording such things as noise level, attentiveness, mood of students, etc.

Although the main emphasis was teacher-child interchanges, researchers also noted conversations between boys and girls. They obtained permission from the teacher to move about the room freely, making it possible to sit very close to the children--even occasionally on the floor with them. The researcher moved around freely only with the consent of the teacher and exercised discretion in not interrupting any lessons. They were as unobtrusive as possible, observing but not taking part in any classroom activity. Verbal interchanges between the researcher and children were avoided as much as possible in the classroom. All of the researchers reported to the effect that the children very quickly treated them as a "piece of furniture" although the teachers remained more or less aware of their presence. It cannot be assumed the classroom was ever completely "natural" in our presence but because the children were unaware of our aims they acted normally thus forcing the teacher to behave in patterned ways.

Two kinds of interviews were conducted with the teachers--a formal interview with predesigned questions and numerous informal conversations about the progress of the children, philosophy of teaching, school activities, etc. These conversations were, as often as not, initiated by the teacher. The researchers also visited almost all of the teachers at their homes.

Early in the kindergarten school year teachers were asked to designate four children--two (a boy and girl) whom they would predict as potentially successful in school and two (a boy and a girl) whom they saw as potentially poor achievers. The choice and the criteria for the choice was left entirely to the teacher. The ghetto teachers had no difficulty making these choices. Talbert, one of the research assistants, notes that in one suburban "middle-class" school the teacher said it was not possible to make such choices, insisting that all of the children would succeed. (She finally settled on a random selection of four children). In subsequent observations, the researchers focused on these children more intensely although the more general teacher-pupil interaction remained primary. Any particular observations of any particular children were always placed in the classroom context.

While the researchers were in the school and school area, they noted various display materials, arrangement of offices, condition of the school (glass in the school yard, broken windows, etc.), activities going on in the school building, the school yard, and the surrounding neighborhood.

In late November and early December, 1967, with the inception of home visits, classroom observations were reduced in number but not in duration--observations in assigned classrooms were undertaken once a week for the remainder of the school year, for the same one and one-half hour time period. In the two subsequent years the duration and frequency of classroom observation varied, depending on the problem and focus of the individual researcher.

In all, more than 306 classroom observations were made--242 in black classrooms and 64 in white.* Two hundred and nine observations were made in 7 kindergartens, 86 in 7 first grade classrooms, and 23 in 1 second grade classroom.

Home Observations

Researchers visited the homes of the four children that had been selected as doing well or doing poorly. They told the families that they were in the schools that their child attended, knew the child's teacher, were interested in how boys and girls learn in school, and that they would like to talk to them about school and their children. It was made clear to the parents that refusal or consent to the interview would not influence the teacher's treatment or attitudes toward the child. They also emphasized that they were not "inspectors," that they would not reveal information to the schools, and they were in no position to "help" the child in school. Nevertheless it is possible that some of the parents thought the visits would in some way help their children or, being unclear of the role of the researcher, were afraid not to cooperate. In any event, only one white "middle-class" family refused to be interviewed.

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*Additional observations were made in a ghetto Head Start Program and in 2 summer school classrooms between kindergarten and first grade.

In all, 180 home visits were made of 28 families. The number and duration of visits varied, largely because of the difficulties in locating some of the families and in setting up observation periods around the parents' working schedules.

During the first visit, the researchers all had similar general questions to ask the parents in conversational form, having previously committed them to memory. In subsequent visits, no formal guidelines for conversation were set out. While the main focus of observations was on parent-child interaction, home observations included everything the researcher could remember from the time of his arrival until the time of his departure--ranging from a description of the condition of the neighborhood, a chronicle of activities occurring in the home during the visit, and such things as trips to the neighborhood market and automobile rides with the children.

During home visits, researchers dressed casually, were relatively informal, and did not take any notes. As soon as possible after the visit, the researcher dictated an account of the observations. (The researchers did take notes on the specific formal questions but only if he "felt" that this would not upset the parents or negatively influence his role as an observer.)

Supplementary Data

At different times during the life time of the project interviews were carried out with other classroom teachers, principals, staff personnel such as librarians, special teachers and counselors as well as some administrative officers including the district superintendent, the superintendent and several members of the school board. Researchers also observed and recorded teachers' meetings and PTA meetings. Over the three years, some 75 interviews with teachers and other school personnel were recorded, along with some 11 PTA meetings and 11 teacher meetings.

More informal observations were also recorded from conversation with teachers and principals in the lounge or in the halls, with children in the hall and on the playground, and on field trips. Additional sources of data include report cards, samples of classroom materials and assignments, office memos to the teachers, and children's drawings. Periodically, diagrams of seating arrangements of the class were drawn.

Recording and Coding

As soon as possible following each observational period or interview researchers dictated, using tape recorders, the protocols from their handwritten notes or, in the case of home visits, from memory. These were subsequently transcribed and checked by the researchers. (In one school, some material was taped.)

A number of different coding schemes were used during the course of the research including that found in "A Cross-Cultural Outline of Education."[7] As the research progressed, however, different substantive interests of the staff eventually led to different modes of analyses with the result that no one particular scheme of coding was applied across the data.

Protection of Subjects

All school personnel involved in the research were fully informed of the nature of the project and guaranteed anonymity. No classrooms were observed without the cooperation of the principal and the teacher.

No classroom materials such as children's homework or tests, were taken without the teacher's consent. Both the teachers and the principals, as well as the assistant superintendent, had the last word in deciding which materials would be used. If they were hesitant to furnish materials requested, no pressure was placed upon them to change their minds.

Although real names, except for teachers and principals, were employed in typed protocols, code names for all subjects were used in all published and unpublished papers. Code names were also used for schools, streets, and all locations in which research was undertaken. Protocols were kept in a locked file with access only to the project staff.

A clear and honest representation of the project's purposes was made to each of the families observed, although they were not told why their children had been chosen. None of the activities taking place in the homes of children were related to school personnel.

Limitations to the Research

The limitation to this type of research, with its emphasis on "naturalistic" or systematic non-participant observation, are well known. There is the very human problem of selective perception, and more generally the distortion of the observation and interpretations to fit preconceived ideas. Further, while observations were extensive, they were made periodically--possibly "missing" important behavior and patterns of activity. In addition, while similar studies might be done, replication of this research is impossible--time, people, and places will have changed.

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[7] Jules Henry, "A Cross-Cultural Outline of Education," Current Anthropology, (July 1960), pp. 267-305.

Less recognized are the distortions of class and race impinging upon the observations. Many, though certainly not all, of the children and the families observed were both black and poor. The researchers, male and female, 2 black and 9 white, were "middle-class" by virtue of both education and occupation. We have been alert to the biases, prejudices, and stereotypes that will inevitably intrude in such situations but have no means of knowing how well they have been controlled.

One critical problem was the view the black families may have had of the researchers. Were they perceived as just one more representative of the "repressive" system? Were they afraid that the researchers might have something to do with cutting off relief, or of bringing down the wrath of the school on their child, or of negatively evaluating some family activity? There is little doubt that some of the families were highly suspicious of the researchers and protected themselves in various ways such as agreeing with every statement, never volunteering information, pretending lack of understanding, or praising, feeding and joking with the researcher. Some of the children, following their mother's cues, may also have been on guard against the researcher's intrusions.

One of the staff has become convinced that some blacks may use a number of adaptive strategies that hide their real beliefs and attitudes in the presence of researchers. She says:

> By way of concrete illustration it might be asked whether the majority of descriptions of black parents and children are not more than descriptions of their adaptation to the presence of a white "middle-class" professional, a condescending interviewer, or an unenlightened "do-gooder."
>
> One can ask what in a black child's past experience with members of the white majority class would motivate him to vulnerability and expression of his inner feelings: Why should a black mother, already experienced with the welfare office and the police department have any trust in a researcher who visits once or twice a week with the promise of alleviation of educational problems? The answer is of course that there is little reason for trust or sharing of confidences and there is a great likelihood of the obtaining of information which only serves to support the already existing stereotypes of the ghetto family.[8]

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[8] Carol Talbert, "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Teacher-Pupil Interaction," (1970) mimeo.

She further notes:

> No one should assume for a moment that black persons are naive concerning their position in society nor the motivation of most researchers. Furthermore, they are quite adept at playing games with the researcher and managing to hide their attitudes.[9]

We are not unmindful of this problem particularly as it impinges on home observations. It may be of somewhat less concern in classroom observations partly because of the age and sophistication of the children and partly because the number and frequency of observations in each classroom are such as to give some assurances we were recording it "like it really is."

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[9] Ibid.

Section 3: Findings and Analysis

CHAPTER I

SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN GHETTO SCHOOLS

The central focus of this research has been on the experiences of a number of children in ghetto schools, "to elucidate their lives, to account for their particular success or failure in school." We do not, of course, have the whole story. But we believe we have a great deal of it. To anticipate, the findings as related to school experiences, are as follows:

1. An ideology of failure permeated the school system we studied. The personnel believed that no matter how well the students were taught, a relatively high proportion were potential failures.

2. Teachers judged the potential success or failure of their students very early in the kindergarten year.

3. Children selected as "doing well" or as "potential successes" tended to be cleaner and better dressed, come from economically "better" homes, be girls, showed ability and willingness to follow directions, and had greater verbal skills, particularly the ability to "code-switch" between Black American English and Standard American English, than children defined as "doing poorly" or as "potential failures."

4. The teachers' choices were not made on the basis of formal testing. We believe that the teachers based their decisions on a number of behavioral traits which they assumed to be predictive of "success." We are not able to precisely identify all these traits. They appear, however, to fall into three categories: (1) those indicating that the child is "teachable" or can learn, such as following directions and verbal skills, (2) those indicating that the child can adapt to bureaucratic school norms, such as being quiet, disciplined, neat and orderly, and (3) those indicating that the child might achieve "middle-class" goals, particularly those related to upward mobility, such as being from economically "better" homes, being submissive and polite, and being able to defer gratifications.

5. The teachers developed some form of "track"system on the basis of their choices.

6. Once a child was labeled by the teacher as belonging in a "low" or "high" group he tended to stay there, not only throughout the school year but in at least one case in our study, through kindergarten, first and second grade.

7. In general, the teacher interacted not only much more frequently with students in the "high" than with students in the "low" groups but differentially--giving more supportive behavior to the "high" groups and more control oriented behavior to the "low."

The Ideology of Failure

The school board, superintendents, principals, teachers and staff personnel in the school system we observed believed that some few of the students would "make it" and many would not. They believed that a relatively high proportion of their students were "slow learners"--that no matter how well they were taught they were potential failures. It was simply expected that many would fail and drop out.

The obvious sources of this belief were the hard facts--few did make it and many did not. Since it had always gone on in the past it was expected to happen in the future. But the belief was supported by other factors. There was the image of life in the ghetto--of "cultural deprivation," inadequate background, attitudes, and cognitive abilities--that was supposed to assure failure for many. There was, too, as documented elsewhere, the racism of the black personnel in the black schools.[1] And, of course, the belief was further reinforced by the comparative impoverishment of the ghetto schools. Large classes, inadequate facilities, and the relative lack of resource personnel suggest the completely rational position that even if the success and failure syndrome were not so entrenched it would "make sense" to concentrate on potentially successful students and put little investment in poor risk children.[2] This is the "under" side of the belief that it was "right" to concentrate on only the most capable. For the others, slum life makes them impossible not only to teach but even to discipline. The belief so permeated the school system that it was explicitly conveyed in the teacher's colleges, was passed on from principals to teachers, and from experienced teachers to new teachers.

One principle reported, for example, when asked what he thought would become of the children:

> Well, many of these children will go on. Most will finish elementary school and most of them I believe will start in high school. Some will drop out though. A few of them will finish high school and start college. I am trying to say that I don't think that the school is going to make that much difference. If it does, you won't really be able to say. I feel some will be successful, but most will be at

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[1] See especially Gerald E. Levy, Ghetto School, Pegasus, (1970).

[2] Personal communication from Carol Talbert.

> the same level as their parents. Some will be on relief. Now I would say that when this generation grows up the percentage on relief (55% in the school) should decrease and that will be an accomplishment in itself.[3]

We have then a situation in which teachers, imbedded with this belief, faces some thirty children in the first weeks of kindergarten or first grade. Decisions about "potentiality" are crucial and the teacher must be programmed to make her choices. Efficiency demands little vacillation and she chooses. She is not called to task for her selections, and even if she were she has the entire panoply of cliches which can be used to legitimize the choices.[4] (And, as will be shown, by the time the children can be tested they have already been "selected.")

It is not surprising then, that when we asked the teacher to select from their classes two students "doing well" and two "doing poorly" they had no difficulty in selecting the potential high achievers and potential low achievers. This is in sharp contrast to the suburban "middle-class" schools where Talbert reports that the teacher simply assumed that all the children would "make it" and if they were having problems it was only a temporary difficulty, such as an emotional problem at home that could be counseled.[5]

It is possible that the ease with which ghetto teachers were able to select potential "high" and "low" achievers, particularly in contrast to white suburban schools, is, in part, related to greater cultural heterogeneity in the ghetto classrooms. We do not have such data comparing suburban and ghetto schools, but the researchers all noted the great range of difference within the ghetto classrooms and homes in the dress, income level, experiences, and preparation for school of the children. (See Table 1, this Chapter.) Some children in the study were, by any criteria one might choose, from "middle-class" families while others in the same classroom lived in families where the income was below the poverty line.

The teachers justified their choices in very similar ways. As one ghetto teacher noted:

> I guess the best way to describe it is that very few children in my class are exceptional. I guess you could notice this just from the way the children were seated this year. Those at Table 1 gave consistently the most responses

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[3] Personal communication from Ray C. Rist.

[4] Personal communication from Carol Talbert.

[5] Carol Talbert, seminar report.

> throughout the year and seemed most interested and aware of what was going on in the classroom.[6]

Of those children at the remaining two tables, the teacher commented:

> It seems to me that some of the children at Table 2 and most all the children at Table 3 at times seem to have no idea of what is going on in the classroom and were off in another world all by themselves. It just appears that some can do it and some cannot. I don't think that it is the teaching that affects those that cannot do it, but some are just basically low achievers.[7]

Children in "High" and "Low" Groups

There is considerable evidence that many of the teachers judged the potential success or failure of all their students shortly after school began. This is particularly striking in one study where the teacher made permanent seating assignments of her kindergarten class on the eighth day of school, to Tables 1, 2, and 3.[8]

There is also considerable evidence that the teachers utilized both academic and extra-academic criteria in their judgments of potential success and failure, although we do not know how conscious the teachers were of the criteria they used. Interviews with the teachers probing for these criteria were relatively unsuccessful: typical are the responses of the teacher already quoted to the effect that "some are just basically low achievers." Whatever the criteria used, they do not involve formal testing. No tests were administered to the children during their kindergarten year except for an intelligence test at the end of the year.

There were marked differences among the children who were placed in "higher" and "lower" groups--differences in appearance, socio-economic status, verbal skills, sexual status, and ability to follow directions. We will review first the differences among the children in the "higher" and "lower" groups, the reinforcement of some of these differences through tracking, and then discuss the general criteria that appear to be involved in the selection of high and low achieving children. (We will not cite all of the studies completed on the project but rather focus on those which highlight the relatively consistent trend of findings. Studies indicating exceptions will be noted.)

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[6] Ray C. Rist, "Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 40, (August 1970), p. 425.

[7] Ibid., p. 425.

[8] Ibid., p. 419.

As indicated, the early selection of "high" and "low" children was most dramatic in a classroom where the teacher made permanent seating assignments of her kindergarten class on the eighth day of school, to Tables 1, 2, and 3. Prior to this time she had several sources of information concerning the children, none of which was directly related to the academic potential of the kindergarten child. These sources concerned various types of social information such as the financial status of certain families, medical care, presence or absence of a telephone in the home, as well as the family structure including the number of siblings and whether the children lived with both, one, or neither of his natural parents.

The teacher also had had several days to observe the children. The researcher reports:

> The behavior, degree and type of verbalization, dress, mannerisms, physical appearance, and performance on the early tasks assigned during class were available to her as she began to form opinions concerning the capabilities and potential of the various children. That such evaluation of the children by the teacher was beginning, I believe there is little doubt. Within a few days, only a certain group of children were continually being called on to lead the class in the Pledge of Allegiance, read the weather calendar each day, come to the front for "show and tell" periods, take messages to the office, count the number of children present in the class, pass out materials for class projects, and be in charge of equipment on the playground, bathroom, library or on a school tour. This one group of children that continually were physically close to the teacher and had a high degree of verbal interaction with her, she placed at Table 1.[9]

As one progressed from Table 1 to Table 2 and Table 3, there was an increasing dissimilarity between each group of children at the different tables on at least four major criteria. The first criterion appeared to be the physical appearance of the child. While the children at Table 1 were all dressed in clean clothes that were relatively new and pressed, most of the children at Table 2 and with only one exception at Table 3, all were quite poorly dressed. The clothes were old and often quite dirty. The children at Tables 2 and 3 also had a noticeably different quality and quantity of clothes to wear, especially during the winter months. Whereas the children at Table 1 would come on cold days with heavy coats and sweaters, the children at the other two tables often wore very thin spring coats and summer clothes. The single child at Table 3 who came to school quite nicely dressed came from a home in which the mother was receiving welfare funds, but was supplied with clothing for the children by the families of her brother and sister.

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[9] Ibid. pp. 417-418.

An additional aspect of the physical appearance of the children related to their body odor. While none of the children at Table 1 came to class with an odor of urine on them, there were two children at Table 2 and five children at Table 3 who frequently had such an odor. There was not a clear distinction among the children at the various tables as to the degree of "blackness" of their skin, but there were more children at the third table with very dark skin (5 in all) than there were at the first table (3). There was also a noticeable distinction among the various groups of children as to the condition of their hair. While the three boys at Table 1 all had short hair cuts and the four girls at the same table had their hair "procesed" and combed, the number of children with either matted or unprocessed hair increased at Table 2 (two boys and three girls) and eight of the children at Table 3 (four boys and four girls). None of the children in the kindergarten class wore their hair in the style of "natural."

A second major criteria which appeared to differentiate the children at the various tables was their social behavior, both among themselves and with the teacher. The several children who began to develop as leaders within the class by giving directions to other members, initiating the division of the class into teams on the playground and seeking to speak for the class to the teacher ("We want to color now"), all were placed by the teacher at Table 1. This same group of children displayed considerable ease in their interaction with her. Whereas the children at Tables 2 and 3 would often linger on the periphery of groups surrounding the teacher, the children at Table 1 most often crowded close to her.

The use of language within the classroom appeared to be the third major differentiation among the children. While the children placed at the first table were quite verbal, both with other children and with the teacher, the children placed at the remaining two tables spoke much less frequently with the teacher. The children placed at the first table also displayed a greater use of Standard American English within the classroom. Whereas the children placed at the last two tables often responded to the teacher in Black American English, the children at the first table did so very infrequently. In other words, the children at the first table were much more adept at the use of "school language" than were those at other tables. The teacher utilized Standard American English in the classroom and one group of children were able to respond in a like manner. In most of the classrooms observed the teacher used both Standard American English and Black American English. The frequency of "no response" to a question from the teacher was recorded at a ratio of nearly three to one for the children at the last two tables as opposed to Table 1. When questions were asked, the children who were placed at the first table most often gave a response.

The final apparent criterion by which the children at the first table were quite noticeably different from those at the other tables consisted of a series of social factors which were known to the teacher prior to her seating the children. Though it is not known to what degree she utilized this particular criterion when she assigned seats, it does contribute to developing a clear profile of the children at the various tables. Table 1 gives a summary of the distribution of the children at the three tables on a series of variables related to social and family conditions. Such variables may be considered to give indication of the relative status of the children within the room, based on the income, education and size of the family.[10]

In this classroom, then, children may have been judged and evaluated at least as much on socio-economic criteria as on intellectual potential. More precisely, perhaps, they may have been judged on the basis of the belief that certain behaviors, attitudes, and physical characteristics are more crucial to learning in school than others. Thus children placed at the "high" tables tended to smell and look cleaner, wore better clothes, and came from families of "higher" socio-economic status than children placed at the "lower" tables. The "high" children also tended to be class leaders although it is unclear how much of this, as we shall note later, is a function of their being placed at the high tables. Finally, the "high" children tended to be more verbal, both in their frequency of response to questions and to their seeming ability to use Standard American English or "school language." Subsequent research on the project has increasingly indicated the importance of the latter: this involves not only the ability to use Standard American English but more critically the ability to switch from Black American to Standard American English in appropriate situations.

Thus, another study of a kindergarten class gives some indication that the child's capacity to alternate between early learned language (in this context referred to as Black American English) and textbook language (Standard American English) may be critical in the initial process of rating children according to their potentiality.[11] This study, analyzing the language of the children in different contexts, indicated that textbook reading is a task calling for the learning of phonological utterances not found in the speech of some pre-school black children. In order to read Standard English textbooks the child must enlarge his phonological structures with almost twice as many new vowel phones. In this classroom, the child's flexibility in code switching was related to his being placed in a High reading group by the teacher. Such placement was also related to some extent to being female and to higher socio-economic status. Talbert suggests:

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[10] Ibid., pp. 419-421.

[11] Carol Talbert, "Socio-linguistic Analysis of Teacher and Pupils," (1970), mimeo.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS FACTORS BY SEATING ARRANGEMENT AT THE THREE TABLES IN THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

FACTORS	SEATING ARRANGEMENT*		
	TABLE 1	TABLE 2	TABLE 3
INCOME			
1) Families on welfare	0	2	4
2) Families with father employed.	6	3	2
3) Families with mother employed.	5	5	5
4) Families with both parents employed.	5	3	2
5) Total family income below $3,000./yr**.	0	4	7
6) Total family income above $12,000./yr**			
EDUCATION			
1) Father ever grade school . .	6	3	2
2) Father ever high school . . .	5	2	1
3) Father ever college	1	0	0
4) Mother ever grade school. . .	9	10	8
5) Mother ever high school . . .	7	6	5
6) Mother ever college	4	0	0
7) Children with pre-school experience.	1	1	0
FAMILY SIZE			
1) Families with one child . . .	3	1	0
2) Families with six or more children.	2	6	7
3) Average number of siblings in family	3-4	5-6	6-7
4) Families with both parents present	6	3	2

*There are nine children at Table 1, eleven at Table 2 and ten children at Table 3.

**Estimated from stated occupation.

> Learning of text-book language (based upon Standard American English) is found to be related to the development of increasing phonological variability on the part of the children. This process does not appear to affect their continual use of their "familial" of Black American English but rather is more an additive, which the child may naturalize if he so desires and the situation calls for it. The placement of the child in a High group seems to be highly related to his ability to switch from familiar to textbook patterns of speech, and this in turn is related to certain socio-economic factors as well as to the sex (female) of the child.[12]

Many of the researchers on this project have noted that girls in the classrooms were not only more frequently singled out as doing well rather than doing poorly but that in general girls received more preferential treatment than boys. Thus, for example:

> Mrs. Bobb was never observed to offer tactile reinforcement to a boy for any reason, whereas she frequently did so for girls--sometimes for no reason, on the girl's part. That the pupils appreciated this fact is evident in the girls' frequent advances to touch her, sometimes merely in passing, while the boys always kept their distance. This difference can be seen not only in non-content interaction (such as while the children are lining up for recess) but in content teaching, as when a girl makes a correct response to a question. In these instances the girl is often hugged while the boy is given only a verbal response.[13]

Interviews with teachers indicate they are probably aware that the girls receive more attention than the boys. Teachers commented:

> "Boys are rougher than girls."
> "The boys are left alone. Girls, we watch after, boys we don't."
> "Most of the teachers are teaching the girls."

We do not know the reasons for this, except that several of the researchers report that the girls tended to bess disruptive (either because of socialization or earlier maturity) and tended to conform more to the teachers' demands. We would suggest that this tends to be a common phenomenon in many public schools. Little girls in the United States tend to be socialized into the kinds of conforming behaviors which are highly regarded in early school years--before enthusiasm and innovation are allowed and important.[14]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Mark Schoepfle, "A Pilot Study of the Ecology of Classroom Behavior," (1968), mimeo.

We have thus far indicated that personnel in the ghetto schools we studied expected that many of the children would fail. We have also demonstrated some of the differences among the children defined as potential successes and failures. Initially, at least, those defined as potential success tended to be cleaner and better dressed, came from economically "better" homes, be girls, show ability to and willingness to follow directions, and have greater verbal skills, particularly the ability to "code-switch" between Black American English and Standard American English, than children defined as "doing poorly" or as "potential failures." Later, to these factors are added some combination of classroom work receiving a grade, attendance, formal test scores, and, very importantly, "reputation," i.e., reports from former teachers. But whatever complex of factors are involved, potential success and failure, as defined by the teacher, is not limited to cognitive abilities (which is not to assume that they should). We have evidence of these decisions being made early in the absence of formal "testing" and evidence of children doing "correct" work most of the time who were not regarded as potential successes by the teacher.[15] In any event, a study of these criteria is critical for it appears that it is the teacher's opinion that plays a dominant role in determining the child's fate in public school.

"Track" Systems and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

In almost all of the classrooms observed, teachers developed some sort of "Track" system. (Only one of the 11 ghetto classrooms observed had no "track" system and in this case the children were all "low" so in a sense they were still tracked.) There were the "highs" and "lows," or the "stars" and "non-stars," or "Tables 1, 2, and 3," or the "Tigers," the "Cardinals," and the "Clowns," etc. As noted, most observers found this tracking, especially in kindergarten, to be clearly related to appearance, to socio-economic status, to following directions, to verbal ability (particularly the ability to switch from "Black American English" to "Standard American English"--that is, to use both in appropriate situations), and to being female.

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[14] One researcher has suggested, from her preliminary observations in black homes that girls are instructed in sexually differentiating roles very early and this is frequently reflected in their "bossy" or "matriarchal" behavior in the early grades with the girls attempting to seduce, ridicule, and outshine the little boys. See Carol Talbert, A Discussion of Research Aims and Strategies for Studying Inner-City Family Behavior," (1970), (b) mimeo. Both Talbert and Gouldner have independently observed a relatively permissive, integrated experimental school, where it appears that, in this atmosphere, the boys, not the girls are dominant. The boys are the catalysts and doers while the girls are less innovative, more restricted, and more concerned with peer relations than with "objects" and "tasks."

[15] Seminar reports of Patricia Roberts and Bruce Zelkovitz.

We do not know to what extent the various groupings of the teacher were based on cognitive abilities and even if adequate measures were available, they would be suspect. They would be suspect because of two significant findings in this research. One is that once a child has been labeled by the teacher as belonging in a "low" or "high" group he tends to stay there, not only throughout the school year but in at least one case in our study, through kindergarten, first and second grade.[16] Another finding is that, in general, the teacher interacts not only much more frequently with students in "high" than with students in "low" groups but differentially--giving more supportive behavior to the "high"groups and more control oriented behavior to the "low."

It is hardly a startling observation that educational success is not assured for all children in an inner-city classroom. The point is perhaps better made that educational failure is assured for some children in inner-city classrooms. They are "pushed out" rather than "drop-out." To the degree that teachers early label the "successes" and the "failures" by whatever criteria--cognitive abilities or social class or some combination thereof--treat the children differentially according to these labels, and pass on to the next teacher these labels the failure of the "failures" should surprise no one.

Researchers reported a rather strong informal norm among teachers such that pertinent information, especially that related to discipline matters, was to be passed on to the next teacher of the student. The teacher's lounge became the location in which they would discuss the performance of individual children as well as make comments concerning the parents and their interest in the student and the school. Frequently, during the first days of the school year, there were admonitions to a specific teacher to "watch out" for a child believed by a teacher to be a "trouble maker." Teachers would also relate techniques of controlling the behavior of a student who had been disruptive in the class. Thus a variety of information concerning students in the school was shared, whether that information regarded academic performance, behavior in class, or the relation of the home to the school.

Studies of the kindergarten classes during the first year of the project indicated clearly both the labeling and differential interaction patterns. In discussing social distance between the teacher and pupils, Rist reports:

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[16] Ray C. Rist, "Student Social Class," op cit.

> The spatial arrangement reflects the role of the teacher as one who is distinct from the choldren and has areas of movement apart from those allowed the children. The teacher in this class is in the position to move without restraint into the restricted area of the children to either reward, criticize, or supervise them. The pupils, on the other hand, are not supposed to leave their desks without first gaining permission from the teacher. The seating of the children within this classroom takes on added significance when it also is noted that the teacher has seated the children according to their "abilities." That is, she has developed a "track" system whereby the most verbal and aggressive children are placed at Table 1, the table closest to the blackboard where the most explanations are given for assignments and projects. Those children at Table 2 and 3 are considered less verbal and less responsive by the teacher. Throughout the year, the researcher has noted numerous instances when the teacher has completely ignored the children at these two tables and concentrated her entire attention upon those few children at the first table.[17]

Rist also reports that the fundamental division of this class into those expected to learn and those expected not to became rigidified during the school year--taking on a "caste-like" character, with the teacher not only focusing most attention on the "high group" but frequently using one of these students as examples for the rest of the class, as in the following:

> (It is Fire Prevention Week and the teacher is trying to have the children say so. The children make a number of incorrect responses, a few of which follow:) Jim, who had raised his hand in answer to the question "Do you know what week it it?" says, "October." The teacher says, "No, that's the name of the month. Jane, do you know what special week this is?" and Jane responds, "It cold outside." Teacher says, "No, that is not it either. I guess I will have to call on Pamela. Pamela, come here and stand by me and tell the rest of the boys and girls what special week this is." Pamela leaves her chair, comes and stands by the teacher, turns and faces the rest of the class. The Teacher puts her arm around Pamela, and Pamela says, "It fire week." The teacher responds, "Well Pamela, that is close, Actually it is Fire Prevention Week."

> (The students are involved in acting out a skit arranged by the teacher on how a family should come together to eat the

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[17] Ray C. Rist, "Social Distance in a Kindergarten Classroom: A Sociological Perspective on Urban Education," unpublished Master's Essay, Department of Sociology, Washington University, St. Louis, (1968), pp. 10-11.

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> evening meal.) The students acting the roles of mother, father and daughter are all from Table 1. The boy playing the son is from Table 2. At the small dinner table set up in the center of the classroom, the four children are supposed to be sharing with each other what they had done during the day--the father at work, the mother at home and the two children at school. The Table 2 boy makes few comments. (In "real life" he has no father and his mother is supported by ADC funds.) The teacher comments, "I think that we are going to have to let Fred (Table 1) be the new son. Sam, why don't you go and sit down. Fred, you seem to be the one who would know what a son is supposed to do at the dinner table. You come and take Sam's place."[18]

Rist's observations indicate that the gap in completion of academic material between the "high" and the "low" group continued to widen as the year progressed. By late May the children at Tables 2 and 3 had little communication with the teacher and little involvement in classroom activities.

Rist further indicates that "the seating arrangement that began in the kindergarten as a result of the teacher's definition of which children possessed or lacked the necessary characteristics for success in the public school system emerged in the first grade as a caste phenomenon in which there was no mobility upward."[19] None of those children seated at either Table 2 or 3 in the kindergarten were assigned to the table of "fast learners" in the first grade.

The second grade was also divided into three groups which the teacher called the Tigers, the Cardinals, and the Clowns (sic!). She indicated that the key factor in this division were reading scores (Tigers highest, Cardinals the middle, and Clowns the lowest) although we note, as indicated in Table 2, that the distribution of social economic status factors remains essentially unchanged from the kindergarten year. Students who had sat at Table A in the first grade were assigned as Tigers, those at Table B as Cardinals, and the Clowns were largely second grade repeaters.

Rist reports again on the "caste-like" character of these groups:

> The caste character of the reading groups became clear as the year progressed in that all three groups were reading in different books and it was school policy that no child could go on to a new book until the previous one had been completed. Thus there was no way for the child, should

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[18] Ray C. Rist, "Student Social Class," op cit, p. 424.

[19] Ibid., p. 431.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS FACTORS BY SEATING ARRANGEMENT IN THE THREE READING GROUPS IN THE SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM

FACTORS			
INCOME			
1) Families on welfare	2	4	7
2) Families with father employed . .	8	5	1
3) Families with mother employed . .	7	11	6
4) Families with both parents employed.	7	5	1
5) Total family income below $3,000./yr**.	1	5	8
6) Total family income above $12,000./yr.**.	4	0	0
EDUCATION			
1) Father ever grade school	8	6	1
2) Father ever high school	7	4	0
3) Father ever college	0	0	0
4) Mother ever grade school.	12	13	9
5) Mother ever high school	9	7	4
6) Mother ever college	3	0	0
7) Children with pre-school experience.	1	0	0
FAMILY SIZE			
1) Families with one child	2	0	1
2) Families with six or more children.	3	8	5
3) Average number of siblings in family	3-4	6-7	7-8
4) Families with both parents present	8	6	1

*There are twelve children in the Tiger group, fourteen children in the Cardinal group and nine children in the Clown group.

**Estimated from stated occupation.

he have demonstrated competence at a higher reading level, to advance since he had to continue at the pace of the rest of his reading group. The teacher never allowed individual reading in order that a child might finish a book on his own and move ahead. No matter how well a child in the lower reading groups might have read, he was destined to remain in the same reading group. This is, in a sense, another manifestation of the self-fulfilling prophecy in that a "slow learner" had no option but to continue to be a slow learner, regardless of performance or potential. Initial expectations of the kindergarten teacher two years earlier as to the ability of the child resulted in placement in a reading group, whether high or low, from which there appeared to be no escape. The child's journey through the early grades of school at one reading level and in one social grouping appeared to be decided from the eighth day of kindergarten.[20]

Analysis of observational data on the second grade, indicates that the teacher was one who, in general, distributed rewards sparingly, but engaged somewhere between two and five times as much "control-oriented" behavior (as distinct from "supportive" or "neutral") with the Clowns as with the Tigers. If one may assume that the presence of neutral and/or supportive behavior is more conducive to learning than punishment or control-oriented behavior it is possible that the Clowns, whom the teacher had defined as "slow and disinterested" did not experience a positive learning situation. The further fact that the Clowns were most isolated from the teacher and received the least amount of her teaching time suggests that there may be good reason to define this group as "slow and disinterested" albeit one reason may be, as Rist points out, a vicious circle in which

> control-oriented behavior is followed by further manifestations of uninterest, followed by further control behavior and so on. The stronger the reciprocity of this pattern of interaction, the greater one may anticipate the strengthening of the teacher's expectation of the "slow learner" as being either unable or unwilling to learn.[21]

It should not be assumed that the amount of interaction with the teacher is necessarily synonymous with learning. In fact, it may be that teacher-dominated classrooms, even with positive overtones, may produce less learning than the more permissive, open, and so-called "free" classroom situations. Being ignored by the teacher may allow the child to develop and experiment on his own. The point is not only that the Clowns were more isolated from the teacher and experienced more control-oriented behavior but that, as in other public schools, the child is glued to his seat and to the teacher's daily schedule. He is not allowed to engage in creative activities--to exercise his (at least in kindergarten) urge to learn. Bureaucratic needs override everything else. There must be quiet, neatness and order. It is not just that the child is ignored but is forced to sit with no alternatives. We will discuss later the hours of unchanging boredom these children are forced to endure and the survival techniques they develop.

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[20] _Ibid._, p. 435.

[21] _Ibid._, p. 442.

Talbert's research parallels Rist's.[22] She studied two black kindergartens in September, in January, and again in April with a total of twenty-five and one-half hours of classroom observations. She reports that the frequency of interaction between teachers and pupils decreased markedly between September and April, with a proportionately greater decrease in positive response and an increase in negatively toned responses. There were marked differences between boys and girls, the boys receiving many more negative responses than girls.

By April there were only a few pupils receiving the majority of the teachers' interactions. These were primarily girls, in the "high" reading group who received many favorable gestures, touches, smiles, positive comments and special privileges such as freedom to move about the classroom, acting as "teacher's helper," carrying messages to the office or other classrooms, etc. The remaining few girls and boys talked among themselves, drew pictures, and spent their days writing and drawing often on the same piece of paper which they erased repeatedly.

The teacher often described herself as prohibited by lack of time from giving the children the attention they needed. She appears to have made the choice of positively reinforcing a limited number of students. The remainder of the children are permitted to just "put in their time." Talbert reports:

> One of the significant findings of this research is the importance of the initial experiences of the pupil in September. If the student has no interaction of a personal kind with the teacher in September, it is fairly certain that he will not be a high interactor in April. The child who receives a high proportion of negative responses in September will not transform and become the recipient of high positive responses. A student receiving high positive interactions in September will remain in a core around the teacher throughout the year being, then, an active participant in most of the teaching which occurs.[23]

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[22] Carol Talbert, "Interaction and Adaptation in Two Negro Kindergartens," op cit.

[23] Ibid.

Further observation supports this:

> Examination of our data indicates the presence of a larger number of children with whom the teacher never interacts in a personal manner. These children are neither disruptive nor high interactors with the teacher. Some of these children actually receive a number of negative responses in the beginning of the school year as the teacher tries to reduce their extreme withdrawing . . . the adaptive response which we have termed peripherality has interesting concomitants. Not only does the child remove himself from the teacher but usually it is a group of boys among whom there is continuing high interaction. These boys are -- usually on the outer rim of the core around the teacher where they will wrestle, share toys and humor, and generally receive a lot of satisfaction from their mutual interactions. Such activities further remove these children from the teacher and consequently from the center where the teaching process is occurring.[24]

In these kindergartens, then, there was an increase in activity on the periphery of the classrooms over the school year. Talbert, who also observed two white "middle-class" suburban kindergartens, indicates that the white teachers tend to interact with all of the children, insisting that the "group" remain intact.

As in the black kindergartens, the boys in the white classes received more negative interaction than the girls and tended to be more active and disruptive. The data indicate however that the boys in the white suburban schools were not treated as harshly as in the black schools.

Talbert suggests that there are at least three kinds of learning occurring in the classrooms she observed:

> In the central group are the active learners, who by virtue of their high interaction with the teacher are able to benefit from such features of their situation as instant feedback, immediate reinforcement, and high repetition of teacher's instructions and directions. Also in this central group are those who, though passive, are exposed to the models presented by the teachers and the "star" performers, these I have labeled the vicarious learners. The third group, the peripheral learners are no doubt learning a great deal but it is not the kind of learning which is desired by the teacher.
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> It would appear that the peripheral pupil is missing out on the crucial area of socialization into the education milieu. He is not in direct contact with the reading and

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[24] Ibid.

arithmetic lessons and other necessary teaching experiences essential to scholastic achievement at later stages. Since the general structure of elementary school instruction is based upon a sequential model in which lower levels must be mastered before progression to the next step, then it seems highly likely that these peripheral pupils will be severely handicapped when they are expected to adapt to the requirements of the first grade.[25]

Pardi studied specific differences in the behaviors of teachers toward high achievers and low achievers, and attempted to measure the effects of these differential behaviors on the situational self-esteem of the high achiever-low achiever students.[26] Four classrooms--one first grade, one fourth grade, one fifth grade, and one sixth grade were chosen. A high achiever and a low achiever were selected, on the basis of the teacher's decision, in each class and observed for five hours each. After the total of forty hours of observation, each child was interviewed in an effort to tap his expressed feelings of self-esteem.

The results indicate: (1) teachers do interact with high achievers and low achievers in qualitatively different ways; (2) the essential difference in interaction is in the frequency of positive" vs. negative interactions--high achievers engage in more "positive interactions, low achievers engage in more "negative" interactions; (3) self esteem is associated with classification as a high-achiever or low achiever--high self esteem is associated with classification as a high achiever, low self esteem is associated with classification as a low achiever.

One related finding is that children defined by the teacher as doing poorly with subsequent infrequent interaction with the teacher tend to participate in class activities only when directly confronted and supervised by the teacher. Roberts reports:

> In observing conformity in the classroom, one notes from the teacher's behavior a high degree of coercive power; and on the part of the child, a relatively high degree of overt conformity. Analyzing and coding conformity in terms of consistency of responses and observing the four children being studied--two defined as doing well and two defined as doing poorly--one discovers a certain inconsistency of response. In making a differentiation between conformity to a stimulus evoked directly from the teacher such as a command or reprimand, it has been observed that the two children doing poorly and the two doing well respond in essentially the same manner, i.e., by obeying the command. However, in observing conformity in a situational context,

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[25] Ibid.

> when the teacher is not directly participating, and the activity is mainly carried on in the group there has been observed a lack of participation and inattentiveness on the part of the two children doing poorly. Whereas, the two doing well have continued to participate in the activity as if the teacher were supervising directly. The situational activities observed were (1) the play period in which the children are given certain toys to play with and (2) the coloring exercises where the teacher gives instructions as to what they are to color and what colors they are to use. In the play situations, the children have games such as puzzles, pegs and boards, or building blocks. The teacher gives certain games to different groups and they are allowed to play unsupervised. In coding responses of Henry and James who are doing poorly, it was found that from four months observations in the school Henry responded positively to the teacher sixteen out of nineteen times and to the situation only three out of twenty-four. James responded positively to the teacher fifteen out of eighteen observations and to the situation only once out of twenty observations. Diane and Ronald, who were categorized as doing well responded in an entirely different manner. Diane responded positively to the teacher thirteen out of fourteen observations and to the situation twelve out of fourteen observations. Ronald responded positively to the teacher ten out of eleven observations and to the situation twenty out of twenty-two observations.[27]

While this study involves only four children in one classroom, the same situation was observed, more informally, in most of the other classrooms. Roberts suggests that this lack of conformity is related to failure and high dependency needs and cites evidence indicating that the non-conformers experienced home situations in which dependency needs were not being satisfied. The data are not rigorous enough to adequately support this hypothesis. It does, however, seem reasonable enough to assume that children defined as doing poorly and subsequently receiving less attention from the teacher would be less inclined to identify with the teacher and with various classroom activities. As Roberts suggests, "the necessary support as a precondition for manipulation by reward and punishment is not provided."

In the observations of various classrooms, there was one exception to the rather harsh picture we have thus far portrayed. One researcher had the opportunity to compare two classes, one which he characterized as highly authoritarian and the other as more democratic.[28] Some of his findings suggest that a low achiever has greater opportunity for self-assertion, social interaction, and imaginative behavior in the more democratic classroom. There appeared to be a greater polarity of success and failure in the authoritarian class where the child learns to stand or fall independent of his classmates, a process which tended to accelerate his travel toward either pole.

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[27] Patricia Roberts, "Satisfaction of Dependency Needs and Conformity," (1968), mimeo.

[28] Marco Pardi, "Attitudinal Differentials in the Classrooms: A Progress Report," (1969) mimeo.

To Summarize

The picture of the ghetto classrooms we observed emerges as this: given, in part, the general expectation that some children will succeed and that others will fail, the teachers early label the children as potential successes and potential failures. These labels tend to persist as the children are placed in "high" and "low" groups. The teachers tend to interact both more frequently and favorably with those "doing well" than those "doing poorly," and pass on information about the children to teachers of subsequent classes. In almost all the classrooms observed, the teachers tended to make the lessons revolve around a very few students, concentrating largely on students who could give the correct answers. Subsequently the groups tended to take on a caste-like character, although some researchers on the project have suggested that the term "caste" for these persistent groups underestimates the permeability of the boundaries, particularly for individuals. It is true, however, that the researchers felt that in some important sense, the teachers at least acted as if those in the "low" groups should be kept separate from the "higher" groups, as if those in the "low" groups, by virtue of their defined potential failure, could "contaminate" the potentially successful. On the other hand, it may be more fruitful to view the situation created in the classroom in terms of social class and as a rather dramatic replication of the black social structure.[29]

Once put in a low group the child tends to stay there partially because of low participation in class activity and partially because his "reputation" precedes him as he moves from class to class. Those labeled as "doing poorly" tend to withdraw to the periphery of class activities: sullen, actively hostile, passive, or disinterested they do worse and worse. Some, it is true, have fun with each other in the back of the room or on the edge of the class when gathering together for group activities. But for most, self-doubt and low self-esteem make them fearful to put forth the increasingly difficult effort to catch up. It is then the teacher can interpret all their behavior according to her initial definition--"Well, he's just a failure," "He's just withdrawn," or "He's just not verbal."

These findings help explain some of the data, especially by Coleman et al. that show the progressive gap in scholastic achievement as the ghetto and/or black child moves through the system.[30] Once defined as doing poorly, he receives less attention and affection from the teacher, participates less in class activities, and subsequently fails to live up to the academic standard of the class. He does not learn because he is not taught. Teachers rarely even make the effort to teach him, partly because they lack the skills and partly because they are not free to use these skills even if they had them. The poor record and teacher gossip precedes him into the next class and the next. The labels persist because they become more and more real. The child believes them and the teachers believe them. Failure for many becomes a certainty and the child becomes less and less responsive to school as the years go by, eventually becoming peripheral to the school scene entirely.

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[29] Carol Talbert, "Black Children, Black Teachers, Black Culture," Ph.D. dissertation, in progress, Department of Anthropology, Washington University, St. Louis, (1971).

Clark also comments on "educational atrophy" and the self-fulfilling prophecy as the outcome of labeling, because those who are treated as incapable of learning eventually become incapable. Labeling processes occur which promote feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, and prompt negative, disinterested and hostile reactions to the school situation. He says further:

> The evidence of pilot projects in 'deprived' schools--odd though it may appear to many--seems to indicate that a child who is expected by the school to learn does so; the child of whom little is expected produces little. Stimulation and teaching based upon positive expectation seem to play an even more important role in the child's performance in school than does the community environment from which he comes.[31]

It is perhaps not surprising that the teachers concentrated on those who could give the "correct" answers.[32] Given the belief that many will fail, given system-wide standards of success and failure, given large classes and limits to time and energy, and given the lack of skills to teach the "unteachable" the teacher opts for concentration on those children they believe destined for school achievement. Paying attention to the few with "payoff" helps create a more rewarding environment for the teacher. She has the feeling that at least she is accomplishing something. Her self-esteem, if nothing else, demands some success with students.

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[30] J. S. Coleman et al., Equality of Educational Opportunity, U. S. Government Printing Office, (1966). See also Thomas F. Pettigrew, Racially Separate or Together?, (McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1971), esp. pp. 51-83.

[31] Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto, (Harper and Row, 1965).

[32] Obviously not all the teacher's attention was on those who could give the correct answers. In one study, the researcher noted (with some support from observers of other classrooms) that she also focused on those who persistently disrupted the class. See, especially, Bruce Zelkovitz, "Disruptive Behavior in a Ghetto Kindergarten: An Exploratory Perspective," (1968), mimeo.

One researcher sums up the situation we found again and again in our observations:

> Mrs. Bobb experienced frustration in attempting to complete her assigned goals. Teaching was a difficult, tiring job for which "you couldn't pay enough." With too large a class and insufficient energy for personal contact with all the pupils--including discipline--she was powerless to control their participation. Being a "perfectionist" she conceivably viewed this lack of control as failure. It is no surprise, then, that she would not only prefer individuals who were more easily approachable and understandable--such as little girls and exceptional boys. These elite pupils could be kept loyal by the granting of favor-incurring opportunities and then utilized to not only communicate individual content teaching to the others, but even discipline them. And in showering this elite group with special attention, she was not deviating from the apparent assumptions of the school's administrative subculture at large: Concentrate on educating only the most capable, because the others' slum life makes them impossible not only to teach but even to discipline.[33]

General Criteria of Success and Failure

We would like to explore, if somewhat speculatively, some of the general factors we believe are involved in the process outlined above, and in particular those general factors which appear to be involved in the selection of "high" and "low" achievers. We believe that the teachers based their decisions on a number of behavioral traits which they assumed to be predictive of "success." These appear to be "teachability," adaptation to bureaucratic school norms, and achievement of "middle-class" goals. While interrelated, these traits tend to form a picture of "typical" children that will "make it" and various types that won't.

"Teachability." In the absence of formal, standardized criteria, teachers must use some model, some set of behavioral traits, to differentiate and place potential "high" and "low" achievers. Given the ideology of failure--that few will succeed and many will fail--our data indicate that first and foremost the teacher tries to find what are believed to be the "teachable." The teacher selects out, from a class of children, those that can be taught, can learn, and will, indeed, allow the teacher to teach, according to the teacher's definition. This process is intensified because the teacher does not have the skills, nor the time, nor the freedom to teach the "unteachable."

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[33] Schoepfle, op. cit., p. 24.

We cannot identify precisely those behavioral traits associated with "teachability." Our observations strongly suggest, however, that verbal skills are critical to the teachers. They involve, in this case, not only the ability to alternate between Black American English and Standard American English, but also, of course, ease in learning some fluency in and speaking Standard American English and early signs of skill in reading and writing Standard American English. Teachers also regard highly the ability and willingness to follow directions, ability and willingness to give the "correct" answer, leadership skills, and participation in classroom activities. Later, to these factors are added some combination of classroom work receiving a grade, attendance, formal test scores, and, very importantly, "reputation," i.e. reports from former teachers.

Bureaucratic Norms. The authoritarian bureaucratic character of American schools has been well documented.[34] The hierarchy of authority is well defined, classes are organized according to various rational criteria, paper work is thought essential and there is a great deal of it, decision-making on curriculum and other matters are passed down through the lines of authority, and there are system-wide standards of success and failure. The students are expected to move in lock step through the bureaucratic structure set up to maintain their cadence--not too fast and not too slow. The emphasis is above all on order, on predicability, quiet, on following orders, on discipline and control.

The problem of discipline and control was uppermost in the minds of the teachers and staff in the schools we studied, often expressed as the necessity to "keep on top of the kids." It was deeply imbedded in the philosophy of teaching, namely, that without discipline and control there could be no learning. The ideal learning situation is a quiet, orderly classroom where there is a place for everything and everything is in its place, where no one speaks without permission, and interaction is only between teacher and pupil. The "good" class had children who had learned to sit quietly at their desks, who raised their hands before talking, who waited for the bell, who could stand in line with their partners, and who could repress expressions of anger, frustration, shame or exuberance. Researchers often commented about what they expressed as an "eerie" feeling of quiet in the schools. The teacher who ran a "taut ship" was respected by both colleagues and the principal and indeed, given the fact that good teaching is so difficult to evaluate, a teacher seemed to be often judged more in his role as a policeman than by any other standard.

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[34] See especially Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, (Random House, 1970).

One of the major concerns expressed by a number of teachers interviewed during the course of the study was whether or not they felt they would be able to control their class. Some apprentice teachers expressed fear of being alone with a class of children until they were sure they had the skills to keep them "under control." In a like manner, a number of the long term teachers also indicated that they would not teach in a grade beyond a certain level. In fact, several indicated that the reason they are teaching the grade they do was first and foremost determined by whether or not they believed they could effectively "run" the class. Comments were made that children "would run all over you if they think they are big enough to get away with it." Not all the teachers agreed at what level the threat became most pronounced. Some indicated that they would not teach any classes beyond second grade, another the fifth and one indicated that she would teach any class but eighth graders.

Though the teachers themselves did not elaborate to any degree on what they meant when they referred to children "running all over them," it may be surmised that there were at least two components: The first is that if children were given a more latitude they could not concentrate on learning and the classroom scene could become one of chaos. Thus the response of discipline and control was viewed as essential to "learning." Neither the teachers nor the principals appeared to entertain the idea that the children might themselves create and establish order given an intrinsic motivation on their part to learn. A second aspect of the teachers' justification of control appeared to stem from a more latent belief that if in fact there were no manage ment and control within the classrooms, not only would one find chaos, but also violence. The fear of violence by the teachers was not often verbalized but occasionally they would mention that the older children "would just as soon hit you as look at you." Thus the rationalization of control became necessary not only to justify the necessity of classroom "management" in order to learn, but also as a survival technique for the sake of the teachers.[35]

It is our belief that it is very difficult for most children to adapt to the authoritarian bureaucratic norms of American schools and when they do they pay a great price in spontaneity and love of learning. Nevertheless, for whatever reasons, some children more easily adapt to these norms than others. The child who is quiet and disciplined, and neat and orderly will tend to be favored.

"Middle-Class" Goals. The formal educational system of American Society, as of any society, not only reflects the goals and standards of the society but, since formal education is a form of socialization, the system plays a critical role in transmitting these goals and standards. One of the most pervasive set of beliefs we found in the schools we studied is related to the mobility system of the United States. The teachers and staff believed in and try to pass on to the children something very close to the following: that upward mobility or "entry into mainstream America" was a "good" thing to strive for, that it was possible in this society, and that the rewards (the standards of success) were largely material--money, a "nice home", living in a "nice" neighborhood, and other life styles. These beliefs had a cutting edge in the schools because the teachers and staff also believed that formal education was not only a good thing in and of itself but was also the critical (if only) means of upward mobility.

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[35] The emphasis on discipline and control has been extensively elaborated in seminar reports, personal communication and various articles all of the research assistants on the project and especially in the works already cited by Ray C. Rist and Carol Talbert.

This set of beliefs has been labeled "bourgeoise" or "middle-class" by a number of writers although the terms so used carry the connotation of a number of other beliefs and standards. We will use the term "middle-class" with the understanding that we are referring to those beliefs related specifically to upward mobility. The choice of the term is directed in part by the fact that the study is of lower class black schools and the idea of "middle-class" beliefs helps to point up the economic and social gap between the teachers and many of their students.

These "middle-class" beliefs were directly expressed by the teachers, reflected in display materials, in reading materials, in classroom discussion, and in the songs that were learned and sung. Books of the "Dick and Jane" and "Here Tip" variety were used in all the schools. Buzy Betty and Lazy Betty were "popular" songs. The following short descriptions of various bulletin boards throughout one school is offered:

9/4/69

1) Black youth carrying a sandwich sign--"Grand Opening A Year of Learning"
2) Two signs together, first shows two black children very poorly dressed and at bottom--"Who Am I?"; second sign shows same two children very nicely dressed carrying signs saying "I Am Somebody--I am courteous, ambitious, honest, neat, respectful and studious." (Both signs in front display case as enter building).
3) Third sign in front display case--Black male and white blond female in academic gowns looking up at cloud. On cloud are color T.V., car, boat, pot of gold, ranch style house and large stack of cash. Letters at top say "Can you climb this ladder?" Ladder between two persons and cloud spells "Education." At bottom of chart are words, "This school can help."

9/12/69

1) Yellow letters at top of board--"You can make it if you try!" Pictures of white males modeling

clothes--appears to be cut-out from Sears Catalogue. All white males, blond, clean shaven and short hair, also blue eyes.

11/11/69

1) "I am Thankful for the Priviledge to Learn"--two white blond children kneeling in prayer.
2) Charlie Brown and Lucy cartoon--first frame, both are standing outside a school. Charlie Brown states, "I hate school." Second frame--Lucy responds, "Good grief, Charlie Brown, school is what you make it." Third frame--Lucy says, "Why if you are neat, clean, and polite and if you study hard in class and play hard at recess, school can be great." Fourth frame--Charlie Brown responds, "Maybe she is right, maybe it is up to me."
3) "Our government at work" in yellow letters at the top. Below are cutouts of various municipal buildings in the city. Picture of student at side of buildings saying, "Take me to the real government."
4) Two blond white witches stirring a pot. The first pot is labeled "study" and the second "hard work." Underneath the pots is the caption "The right formula for success."
5) Two white pilgrims dressed in traditional costumes. The female is holding a Bible and the male a gun. No wording.
6) Indian on his knees making smoke signals. Below fire are words, "Heap good rules." On each puff of smoke is a rule. The first says "Always walk in the halls." The second, "Be kind to other children." On the third, "Wait quietly at the fountains," and on the fourth, "Play safely on the playground."
7) Red letters at the top state "You Can" and at the bottom of the board continue "Start Now." In the middle of the bulletin board is an article taken from Ebony detailing the life of a black man in Texas who has been making cowboy boots for over forty years.[36]

All of the observers indicated that these "middle-class" beliefs, particularly as related to upward mobility, appeared to be deeply internalized by the teachers and staff. After all, they themselves, often at considerable sacrifice, had "made it". To deny these beliefs would deny some important basis of self-esteem. And it was thought critical to pass these beliefs on to the children. One measure of success in teaching was thought to be the degree to which the teachers were able to ready their pupils for mobility.

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[36] Ray C. Rist, "The Socialization of the Ghetto Child Into the Urban School System," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Washington University, St. Louis, (1970), pp. 163-164.

But there were too many children. Thus the teachers we observed believed that some of the children would "make it," like they themselves had done--not only through school but into "good" jobs. In making their judgments as to the potential lucky ones they utilized not only the behaviors demanded by the school bureaucracy but a set of factors they believed to be conducive to potential learning and to getting ahead. We believe that these beliefs were tempered by the fact the teachers were black, were already "middle-class" in occupation, income, and life styles, and had ideas about those specific behaviors which a minority group member must have in order to succeed.

Thus, as in other schools, verbal abilities and perceived general intelligence were critical: in contrast to other schools we speculate that submissiveness, ability to defer gratification, promptness, and politeness took on special importance. The phenomenon of the "over-conforming" upwardly mobile black is not unknown in the United States.

We have already indicated that the data also suggested that the teachers may have used socio-economic criteria in their early placement of children. Thus children from families either already in the "middle-class" or on their way tended to fare best. They continued to fare better, in part, because the goals and values they were learning at home tended to "fit" those of their teachers and the more general ethos of the schools.

A persistent theme in our report is that all American public schools are and always have been institutionalized in the "middle-class" direction. This, along with increasing bureaucratization, results in a built-in incapacity to motivate and influence not only the lower class child but all those who because of accidents of birth, socialization, or conviction do not fit the "middle-class" model. There are a number of labels teachers, principals, and counselors give those who do not fit the model--they have "limited potential," they have "emotional problems," they are "trouble makers," they are "disruptive," their bodies are "ahead of them" or they are "not all together." In many ways those who are so disadvantaged are shunted off into educational railroad sidings to make way for those who have the "middle-class" ticket.

Section 3

CHAPTER 2

THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL

In November 1967 the researchers asked each of the kindergarten teachers to select two children "doing well" and two "doing poorly." The researchers visited the homes of these children detailing their general living conditions and recording various aspects of interaction within the family. In all, 180 visits, lasting usually about an hour and a half, were made in 28 homes.

As already indicated we have become very much aware of the possible biases of a number of our researchers in viewing the home--partly from subsequent work of one of our own staff members. It is not difficult to observe that a home is old or new, cold or warm, clean or dirty, and there is an abundance or lack of food. It is very difficult to objectively observe family life styles that may be different from one's own without making adverse judgement. Further, there is no question that some of the families we observed regarded the researcher in the same category as a social worker, parole officer, or building inspector and reacted with the familiar masking behavior which reveals as little as possible. We therefore urge caution in the interpretation of the family data.[1]

To preview our discussion, observations in the home suggest the following:

1. Children whom the teacher defined as doing poorly tended to come from economically poorer families than children defined as doing well.

2. The child's relationship with his parents tended to be remarkably similar to the child's relationship to the teacher both in frequency of interaction and in the rates of negative and positive responses.

3. Many parents, especially mothers, tended to emphasize the mastery of such skills as writing, numbers and the alphabet and to be less concerned with problems of "security" or "adjustment". Similar emphasis has been noted in the classroom.

4. Black children may be socialized into the use of language somewhat

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[1] Carol Talbert, "A Discussion of Research Aims and Strategies for Studying Inner-City Family Behavior," (1970), mimeo.

differently than white children: within many homes it appeared that children rarely participated in adult conversation although they were constantly exposed to interaction among adults.

5. In sharp contrast to the "myth" of the non-verbal black child (usually observed as non-verbal in school situations) almost all of the children observed had an extensive verbal repertoire, particularly in relating to peers and siblings on the streets and playgrounds.

Homes of the "highs" and "lows"

The data indicate that the children selected as doing poorly tend to come from homes qualitatively different than those of children defined as doing well. Although the observations in the homes of the children indicated many different life styles, children whom the teacher defined as doing poorly tended to come from economically poorer families. These homes tended to be dirty, shabby, often cold and food appeared in short supply. The families of those children defined as doing well tend to live in well kept homes, with separate rooms for cooking, eating, and sleeping--with good furniture, adequate heating, and pictures on the wall and a good supply of books, magazines and toys.

In general the types of relationships of the parents to the child in the homes we studied are remarkably similar to the types of relationships of the pupil with the teacher in school. According to our observers, children who were excluded in the classroom tended to be also excluded from parent relationships in the home. Those who received high rates of negative response in the classroom also tended to receive high rates of negative response in the home, while those who received positive responses in the classroom tended to receive high rates of positive responses in the home. Those relatively low in the frequency of interaction with their parents, tended also to be low in the frequency of interaction with their teachers.[2]

Those children defined as doing well by the teacher tended also to come from homes where there was support and encouragement, there was access to adults as sources of information and guidance, and where the child had developed some school "know-how" and was, before beginning school, learning to learn the school way. Some of this is detailed in the following comparison of parent-child and teacher-child relationships. Roberts observed two brothers, John and Lee, and one girl, Lynn (all three labeled as poor students) and Emily and Roy (both labeled as doing well) in their homes and classrooms during kindergarten and the first grade.[3]

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[2] Patricia Anne Roberts, "Comparisons of Parent-Child, Teacher-Child Relationships," (1969), mimeo.

[3] *Ibid.*

Roberts summarizes her research as follows:

> Although each of the five children studied are a part of the same general environment, John and Lee seem to be exposed to an environment which is harsh and reference to discipline, punishment and stereotypic categorization. They appear to be disinterested in school and typically peripheral members in the learning situation. Their teachers do not expect them to respond to classroom learning and have excluded them from this process. Most instances of interaction between the teacher and these children are punitive or derogatory in nature, which facilitates further restriction on their life space. In the home, similar patterns of interaction can be viewed. The reward system is more negative than positive. The parents of John and Lee have discouraged entrance to many avenues of participation in learning experiences. The children are encouraged to be quiet and obedient. Reward and explanatory guidance are rarely observed. Further, the parents reinforce the teacher in the employment of harsh or punitive measures. Lynn has also been exposed to stereotypic categorization in the classroom. Her teachers say that she is shy but not incapable of learning. However, she has also been pushed to the periphery of the group and ignored. She is not expected to respond to the teacher or to participate in learning experience. Although she is not exposed to the punitive force of the teacher, she is not accepted in the group of those who are taught and is typically excluded from the teacher network of relations. Lynn's life-space within the classroom as well as at home has been restricted. At home Lynn receives little reward or opportunity for information exchange. Her role in the family seems to be a choice between isolation or playing the part of "Cinderella." Further restriction occurs due to lack of attention and general concern on the part of the mother. . . . The pressures placed on Lynn have forced her to withdraw in both the home and the school and not participate in relations with others.
>
> Emily and Roy exemplify much less restrictive relations. Emily's mother and the entire family unit give attention, care, affection and encouragement so that her experiences are rich in variety and quality. Both Emily and Roy are accepted in school as central members of the group. They are both expected to respond correctly and consistently by the teacher. Their reward system both at home and at school is more positive than negative, and neither child is exposed to the harsh or punitive environment that exists for other children. At home Roy's mother and siblings display concern, attention and affection also.

Emphasis on Skills

In many of the black homes, especially those economically better off, observers noted differences in the parents, especially the mothers, attitudes toward their children than is commonly attributed to some white "middle-class" parents. The black parents do not express the same concerns with developmental stages and psychological security as their white counterparts. The emphasis in the black homes is rather to "perform your lessons well," "to stay in the lines when you draw," to "keep clean" and especially to "get a good report card." These parents little emphasized the expressive and creative arts and want their children to learn their numbers and their letters.

Talbert compares these patterns of learning in the home and classroom:

> Looking now to the classroom it can be seen that many of the interactions between teacher and pupil are modeled upon this same pattern. . . . We might view the reliance upon repetition and drill, the discouragement of "nonsense" art, the minimization of elaborate explanations as reflecting the factor that the majority of Black mothers and teachers are concerned, not with their child feeling "secure" and "adjusted" but with the learning and possession of skills requisite for possible socio-economic advancement.
>
> The most frequent response of the parents when asked about their child's experiences in school was concerned with his mastery of writing, numbers, and the alphabet. Given this concern it is not surprising that the teacher also concentrates upon control, orderliness, and quiet. She insists upon a minimum of "fooling around" and "meddling" and will enforce her will by threat and ridicule. The teachers and parents do not appear to be as concerned, as do "middle-class" parents, with understanding the dynamics of the child's developing ego but rather with his overt behavior and its acceptability. This is expressed in the classroom when the teacher, faced with a wrong answer by the child, will persist in repeating the same question in the same manner, until she either gives up or the child makes the correct response.[4]

Patterns of Learning Language

As we have previously indicated, our observations in the classrooms indicated very clearly that what has often been called "middle-class" beliefs, especially as related to upward mobility, were pervasive among the teachers and staff. It was not until late in the research, however, that the researchers came to recognize the possibility that the "middle-class" orientation had far greater ramifications. Increasing emphasis on linguistic studies and more participant (as opposed to naturalistic) observations of black families have forced us to confront the possibility that many black children are socialized into the use of language quite differently than white, and especially white "middle-class," children.

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[4] Carol Talbert, "A Discussion of Research Aims and Strategies for Studying Inner-City Family Behavior," (1970), mimeo.

This hypothesis is explored in some depth later in the report. We note here, however, that our observations in the homes of both the children doing well and doing poorly strongly suggest that knowledge, skills, and techniques of adapting tend to be discovered and passed down more through peer relations with the children rather than through adults directly passing on information to the children. Talbert reports:

> Our observations in the homes of the children made it clear that though the children may be non-interacting with the adults, they were exposed and listening to, the exchange of information of the adults. The verbal interchange between the children often did not ease while adults were talking but rather it continued along side the adult's own conversation. The children were rarely asked to participate in the adult's conversations, though they might be asked for information or to perform a task. A child's occasional spontaneous contribution would be met with approval, usually, if it were witty or in some other way "adult-like" (for example, a small boy addresses his mother in terms which a boy friend might use, "hi, baby", "sure, cutie pie", and his mother laughed.) Frequently, the child would respond to a command or a request for information with a "no response" or possibly a nod of the head. This "no response" appears to be more tolerable to the parent than an assertive erroneous response which would stand the chance of eliciting a threat, ridicule, or physical reprimand by the mother.[5]

It has been tempting for some to define this situation as one of "non-learning" for the child. This would, however, once more reflect "middle-class" conceptions of a learning situation. Typically, "middle-class" parents interact directly with their children--answering questions, giving explanations, exchanging information, reasoning, etc. But this is not the only way to learn. In the homes we visited the children were "privy to the continual exchange of information between the adults concerning problems, aspirations, and often feelings and comments about the child himself. The child is then learning, not by direct and elaborate explanations but rather by exposure, listening and peer interaction."[6]

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[5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.

Again, while we will explore the development of language later, we note here that there has been a tendency in educational literature to fail to distinguish between language difference and cognitive deficiency. It is sometimes assumed that as Black American English is a limited adaptation to Standard American English so too are black children limited in their intellectual discriminative abilities. We found no evidence for such an assumption. In appropriate settings, such as with their peers and siblings, the verbal repertoire of the black child is very extensive. In fact, verbal facility is one attribute which brings high prestige to a black person.[7]

Preparation for Failure or Success

While there is a relationship between the quality of a child's life at home and his potential success or failure at school we have come, in the course of this research, to have very serious reservations about any attempt to "blame" the home environment for failure in school. On the contrary: it is possible to view the life styles and interactions in some of the poorer homes we visited as preparation for coping with inevitable failure in school and provides the groundwork for adaptive strategies which allows the child to remain in school for as long as he does. Some of these strategies are outlined in the next section. We note again here, however, that the staff in the schools we studied believed that some of the children would succeed and many would fail, that selection of the potential successes and failures were made early--at least partly on the basis of socio-economic criteria--and, that the children so labeled were treated differentially in ways that would assure successful prediction. Children who were defined as failures--shunted off to the periphery of the classes--learned to tolerate hours of boredom, to "cover," to play "as if," not to interrupt their elders, to be apparently "silent," to repress anguish and shame, etc. They were able to do this, the five and the six and the seven year olds because, in part, they experienced similar patterns at home.

Given the certainty that some of the children would fail, there is, also, no question in our minds that some families did little to offset the results of this process. They accepted it as more or less inevitable. In the conclusion to her home observations, Roberts notes:

> Sometimes it requires a great deal of support and encouragement on the part of the parents to ward off the negative and harmful effects of cumulative and reinforced failure particularly if it occurs too often in the early years in such a "strange" environment as the school. This encouragement and support is something to which many children may not have access.[8]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Roberts, op. cit., p. 8.

Grier and Cobbs make the same point in a much stronger vein:

> Black children go to school and rapidly come to perceive the formal learning process as different, strange, unnatural, not meant for them, and not really relevant for them. The air they breathe, the water they drink, and the words they read all tell them that white people are smart and black people are dumb. And they could blot it all out and fight their way to intellectual distinction were it not for their parents. All messages are filtered through the parent-child relationship--and all have relevance only as they relate to that union. . . . The black parent approaches the teacher with the great respect due a person of learning. The soaring expectations which are an important part of the parent's feelings find substance in the person of the teacher. Here is the person who can do for this precious child all the wonderful things a loving parent cannot. The child is admonished to obey the teacher as he would his parents and the teacher is urged to exercise parental perogatives, including beating. In this the parent yields up his final unique responsibility, the protection of his child against another's aggression.[9]

There is no question, on the other hand, that many of the children came from homes that better equipped them for success in school--as the schools are now set up--than others. Those children defined and treated as potential achievers tended to come from homes which were not only higher in economic status but where there was emphasis on order and predictability, where the importance of formal education and upward mobility were emphasized, and where the standard of success was largely material--the same goals emphasized in the schools. In such homes the children were supported and encouraged in their schooling: there were books and magazines and crayons and paper and "educational" toys. While the "fit" is far from perfect, there is evidence in our data that the closer the family approximates the beliefs and values of the school the greater the chance of the success of the child in the school.

As truistic as it is, this goes most of the way in explaining the differential "success" of "middle-class" and "lower-class" schools in keeping children in school. It does not mean that given the present social and political inequities in American society that the "middle-class" schools "educate" children better to cope with their environment. It is indeed possible that the ghetto schools do a rather good job of training children for unskilled jobs and the institutions of the caseworker, police, unemployment offices, and the penetentiary--to train them in strategies of survival in a bureaucratized world.

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[9] William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, Black Rage, (Basic Books, 1968), pp. 134-137. One of the research assistants on the project noted that parents sometimes wrote on the back of their children's report cards when they returned them to the teacher that the teachers were to "whip" the children for any variety of reasons the parents listed. See Ray C. Rist, "The Socialization of the Ghetto Child into the Urban School System," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Washington University, St. Louis, (1970), p. 412.

Section 3

CHAPTER 3

LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM

In this chapter we will attempt to capture some of the dynamics of the day to day life in the classrooms we observed, with particular attention both to the interaction of the "high" and "low" students with the teacher and to the adaptations some students made to this interaction. In general, we found that:

1. The teachers tended to interact much more frequently and more positively with students in the high groups: in what appeared to be a response to this, students in the "low" groups tended to "tune out" a great deal of the time.

2. Students in the "low" groups often suffered ridicule and belittlement from classmates, particularly those in the "high" groups.

3. Students in the "low" groups, particularly the boys, often developed tightly knit friendship groups.

4. The teachers placed a great deal of emphasis on discipline and control, enforced frequently by some form of physical punishment; while disruptive behavior did occur, the dominant characteristic of the classroom was overt docility.

"Tuning Out"

As we have indicated, in almost all of the classrooms we observed, the teacher established some formal or informal "track" system usually centered around "high" and "low" reading groups. She tended to interact more positively with the "high" groups and spent more time with them, relying on the same few students for the "right" answer and using such students as models the rest of the class would do well to emulate.

The students in the "high" groups spent more time directly with the teacher, in oral recitation, in getting and holding the attention of the teacher, and in carrying out the special privileges of the "teachers helpers" such as handing out material to the class, and running errands around the school. One typical pattern in all of the classrooms was that the teacher frequently kept calling on the children she knew had the answer until she got the right answer.

The "low" students, often on the physical periphery of the class, tended to "tune out" a good deal of the time--looking out the window, playing with pencils and crayons, talking among themselves in almost inperceptible whispers, writing and drawing and erasing and writing and drawing and again erasing. As one researcher suggested, the children on the periphery, especially the boys, were learning to tolerate extreme boredom.[1] A pediatrician once noted that an adult would have great difficulty tolerating the irritation and pain of teething: our observations suggest that few adults would be able to tolerate the hours of boredom suffered by the ghetto children on the peripheral fringes of their classrooms. The peripheral children, in addition, learned to act very obediently, neatly and painstakingly so. The "high" students were allowed a bit more expressivity.

One researcher noted several responses of the children to what he called "inadequacy anxiety": some withdrew and made few responses, others began to copy and mimic each other, others began disruption, and still others attempted to hoard up a large number of toys and material.[2]

Like Father, like son

The "low" groups in the classrooms we observed not only suffered low esteen and isolation from the teacher, but also became the butt of ridicule and belittlement from their peers in the "high" group. While such remarks as the following were frequently recorded from children in the "high" groups toward those in the "low" they were rarely noted from the "low" to the "high":

> Mrs. Caplow says, "Raise your hand if you want me to call on you. I won't call on anyone who calls out." She then says, "All right, now who knows that numeral? What is it, Tony?" Tony makes no verbal response but rather walks to the front of the classroom and stands by Mrs. Jones. Gregory calls out, "He don't know. He scared." Then Ann calls out, "It sixteen stupid," (Tony sits at Table 3; Gregory and Ann sit at Table 1.)
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> Jim starts to say out loud that he is smarter than Tom. He repeats it over and over again, "I smarter than You. I smarter than You." (Jim sits at Table 1, Tom at Table 3.)

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[1] Carol Talbert, "Interaction and Adaptation in Two Negro Kindergartens," Human Organization, (Summer, 1970), pp. 103-114.

[2] Ray C. Rist, seminar report.

> Milt came over to the observer and told him to look at Lilly's shoes. I asked him why I should and he replied, "Because they are so ragged and dirty." (Milt is at Table 1, Lilly at Table 3.)
>
> When I asked Lilly what it was that she was drawing, she replied, "A parachute." Gregory interrupted and said, "She can't draw nothin'."[3]

The "high" groups also frequently took the role of the teacher in maintaining order in the classroom and in urging conformity to the teacher's rules:

> The teacher is out of the room. Pamela says to the class, "We all should clean up before the teacher comes." Shortly thereafter the teacher has still not returned and Pamela begins to supervise other children in the class. She says to one girl from Table 3, "Girl, leave that piano alone." The child plays only a short time longer and then leaves.
>
> The teacher has instructed the students to go and take off their coats since they have come in from the playground. Martin says, "O.K. y'all, let's go take off our clothes."
>
> The children are preparing to go on a field trip to a local dairy. The teacher has designated Gregory as the "sheriff" for the trip. Mrs. Caplow stated that for the field trip today Gregory would be the sheriff. Mrs. Caplow simply watched as Gregory would walk up to a student and push him back into line saying, "Boy, stand where you suppose to." Several times he went up to students from Table 3 and showed them the badge that the teacher had given to him and said, "Teacher made me sheriff."[4]

The children in the "high" groups thus not only began to internalize the positive attitudes of the teacher towards themselves but also the attitudes of the teacher towards others in the class. We are again reminded that one of the most visible and critical factors in a child's success or failure in the public schools is the opinion of the teacher. A potential "high achiever," as defined by the teacher, not only enjoys the esteem and attention of the teacher and through him the high expectation of subsequent teachers as the word is passed on, but is spared the scorn of classmates.

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[3] Ray C. Rist, "Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education," Harvard Educational Review, 40, (August, 1970), p. 429.

[4] Ibid., pp. 427-428.

Friendship Group

One frequent response of children in the "low" groups was to develop tightly knit friendship groups. This was, in several classrooms, more common among boys than girls. Girls tended to be more oriented to the teacher or were "loners" while boys looked to each other for companionship and support. One researcher suggests: "It appears, then that the boys must rely on each other's proximity, perhaps for support, more than must the girls. They apparently suffer greater anxiety when participating with the teacher--especially on an individual basis--and only a few boys are able to overcome this difficulty."

These friendship bonds among some of the boys in the "low" groups may be somewhat fragile. In one second grade classroom, for example, the group that had the strongest friendship bonds also rejected, on other sociometric criteria, members of their own group. In one kindergarten, children in the "lower" groups were frequently noted mirroring toward each other the attitude of the teacher and "high" students toward them. "Low" students called each other "stupid," "dummy," or "dumb-dumb" along with threats of beatings, "whoppins," and spitting.

There are, however, a number of descriptions of friendship among urban lower class blacks which suggest a quality of denigration, ridicule, threats, taunting, etc.[5] There is no evidence that this would indicate less solidarity or affection: an alternative view might be that such verbal denigration is excellent practice for dealing with a world in which blacks are openly or covertly viewed as stupid and dumb.

Learning on the Periphery

One researcher, observing in a kindergarten where "tracking" of the students was especially marked (Tables 1, 2 and 3) suggests that although those seated at Tables 2 and 3 participate much less than those at Table 1 and were systematically ignored by the teachers, they nevertheless did learn some classroom materials. He notes:

> I contend that in fact they did learn, but in a fundamentally different way from the way in which the high status children at Table 1 learned. The children at Table 2 and 3 who were unable to interact with the teacher began to develop patterns of interaction among themselves whereby they would discuss the material that the teacher was presenting to the children at Table 1. Thus I have termed their method of grasping the

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[5] See, for example, Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner, Little, Brown and Company, (1967).

material "secondary learning" to imply that knowledge was not gained in direct interaction with the teacher, but through the mediation of peers and also through listening to the teacher though she was not speaking to them. That the children were grasping, in part, the material presented to the classroom, was indicated to me in home visits when the children who sat at Table 3 would relate material specifically taught by the teacher to the children at Table 1. It is not as though the children at Table 2 and 3 were ignorant of what was being taught in the class, but rather that the patterns of classroom interaction established by the teacher inhibited the low status children from verbalizing what knowledge they had accumulated. Thus, from the teacher's frame of reference, those who could not discuss must not know. Her expectations continued to be fulfilled, for though the low status children had accumulated knowledge, they did not have the opportunity to verbalize it and, consequently, the teacher could not know what they had learned. Children at Table 2 and 3 had learned material presented in the kindergarten class, but would continue to be defined by the teacher as children who could not or would not learn.[6]

We do not know how general this type of learning may be. Surely some occurs but whether it is particularly unique to the kindergarten he studied or if it is true of many children in many grades is not known. Talbert, for example, reports that while children on the periphery were learning a great deal it was certainly not the kind of learning desired by the teacher. This pattern of learning is worth noting, however, since it resembles the socialization pattern of many lower class children, especially blacks, where the child until the age of puberty is not considered a viable participant in adult communication networks. He is constantly exposed to adult interaction and communication, but is not expected to take part in it and may, indeed, be punished if he tries. He "is seen and not heard." At the same time he carries on intensive communication with his peers.

Discipline and Control

The overwhelming emphasis on discipline and control in the schools we studied has been noted in Chapter 1. As Talbert has noted the "good" class is one in which the children are silent, have learned to wait for the bell, know how to stand in line with their partners, to respond "yes, ma'am" and "no ma'am," to mimic perfectly what they are told to say, and to repress expressions of anguish and shame.

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[6] Ray C. Rist, "The Socialization of the Ghetto Child into the Urban School System," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Washington University, St. Louis, (1970), pp. 382-392.

Disciplinary methods varied. As Henry noted in an earlier report:

> Teachers have different ways of enforcing silence, order and obedience. One may walk around the room in constant vigilance; another may rely more on verbal admonition or on paralinguistic devices like stares or sharp tones. Sometimes children are hit. . . . Along with this insistence on almost total silence, goes a tight restriction of movement, so that the children are, on the whole, permitted to be only where they are supposed to be at a given moment and they may be sharply reprimanded for being "out of place."[7]

The researchers reported a number of instances of physical punishment. Actual beating was relatively rare, and as noted in the following excerpt was usually carried out of sight of the class and the observer. Less rare were instances of shaking the child, pushing his head down on the desk, or pulling at his arm:

> During the singing some of the children had been singing out of turn or had been singing the wrong words at the wrong times. Mrs. McAllester came back to her desk and said flatly and irritatedly, "You know what, boys and girls? We'll have to stop for a minute, for some of you think it's time to play." She calls up three boys and one girl and says, flatly, "Some of our friends come over here!" They come to her desk and she picks up a stick. It is about 12 to 14 inches long. It is round and looks like bamboo. One at a time Mrs. McAllester takes the four children into the cloak room . . . where she and they cannot be seen. As she takes each one, whom she called her "helpers" into the room, she hits them. I could not see the actual beating, but I could count the number of times the stick made contact. Harold was first and she struck him twenty times; Ben was second and she hit him fourteen times; Lydia was hit fourteen times and Bobby caught it twelve times. Each kid began to cry even before he was hit, and each cried during the whipping and after. The children at their seats were all staring at the cloak room with somber expressions on their faces, but there was no sound out of them. When Lydia was in the cloak room I could hear Mrs. McAllester say, softly, "Bend way over." The whipping took place between 9:28 and 9:30 A.M.
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> Mrs. McAllester made short work of them and the children went back to their seats crying and she went back to the record player. Then the whole class sang, in a very somber

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[7] Jules Henry, "Second Quarterly Progress Report," Project No. 6-2771, Office of Education, December, (1967).

tone, about "The Ding-Dong Choo-Choo." This time, when they got through the song, there were no smiles.[8]

The general atmosphere in the classes we observed was harsh. Both the project studies which focused on measuring and "counting" specific responses of the teachers and those which emphasized more descriptive materials indicated a great deal of control-oriented behavior, rejection and devaluation of the self-image. Body contact was seldom found as an expression of affection but used frequently for disciplinary means. Current learning theories which emphasize consistent and immediate rewards for "desired" behavior and devalue punishment as a means for controlling "undesired" behavior were rarely practiced.

One study of a classroom, supported by other observations, suggests that disruptive behavior, as defined by the teacher, occurred frequently from some few of the children.[9] It appeared that almost any act could be defined as disruptive--getting out of the seat, walking around, opening drawers, leaning across the table, rattling papers, calling out to get the teacher's attention, talking with other children, or turning of the head or body toward another person or object and touching another child. Further, those children defined by the teacher as disruptive did not appear to engage in behavior significantly different from those not defined as disruptive. This study also suggested that aversive behavior of the teacher--commands, physical manipulation, exclusion from the group, threats and reprimands--did not extinguish the disapproved behavior over a period of months. In this classroom, as in others already discussed, the teacher tended to focus on those children who had the correct answer and on those children who were persistently disruptive.

While disruptive behavior did occur, the dominant characteristic of the classrooms was overt docility. There were very few independent decisions and suggestions on the part of the children. They rarely made spontaneous contributions whether within or without the context of the lessons. There was little humor, little expressiveness. The children rarely approached the teachers physically possibly because of the rejection they knew would come. There was little freedom for the inquisitiveness of the child: they had no freedom to roam the room and look at the different animals, pictures, books, etc.

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[8] "Third Quarterly Progress Report," Project No. 6-2771, Office of Education, (February, 1968), p. 13.

[9] Bruce Zelkovitz, "Disruptive Behavior in a Ghetto Kindergarten: An Exploratory Perspective," (1968) mimeo; see also Mark Schoepfle, "A Pilot Study of the Ecology of Classroom Behavior," (1969), mimeo.

The Child As a Passive Participant

Much of educational theory and many of the popularized accounts of life in school (ghetto or not) fails to note or to document the viability of children as they struggle to maintain some modicum of self-esteem in the face of rejection from both teachers and some classmates. This is, of course, difficult to document. Indirectly it may be related to the concern of schools for discipline and control, expressed as the critical necessity to "keep on top of the kids." In any event, it should not be assumed that children in the "low" groups accept their positions passively.[10]

It is true, as we have noted, that many of the children on the periphery, experiencing continued failure and certainly little feeling of accomplishment, tended to withdraw, make few responses, and did only what needed to be done to get by--which in part means behaving in such a way that he would not be punished and ridiculed in front of the class. But there were others who were continually disruptive (which tended to reinforce the teacher's definition as belonging in the "low" group), and who formed supportive friendship groups. Among such children appeared the beginnings of a festering resentment against a cold, bewildering, authoritative school and its agents.

It would be surprising to no one who has worked on this project if these youngsters drop out of school at the earliest possibility and, however harsh, would prefer the street life to what they have known in school. We do not know whether a more humane school system--one in which it was assumed that not only all children want to learn but that it takes a great deal of effort to keep them from it--would mitigate these persistent failures in the context of a larger society in which economic and political inequities continue to shape the schools and the lives of the children. We have, however, some strong recommendations for change which are both possible and which we believe even given the present system of public school education, will go far toward tempering the damage to many of our children.

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[10] See especially Bruce Zelkovitz, "Disruptive Behavior in Ghetto Schools, Part I: A Reconceptualization," (1969) mimeo.

Section 3

CHAPTER 4

AN ESSAY ON BLACK AMERICAN ENGLISH

Prepared by Marshall Durbin

> They ran their words together, and almost invariably dropped the last consonant such as *las'*, *bes'*, and so on. Wherever the letter *e* occurred, they called it *a*, and they pronounced *i* as *e*. The word *clear* they called *clare*, while *chair* was *cheer*: *fear* was changed to *fare*, and *care* to *keer*. They usually gave *r* the sound of *u* as *born*, *baun*: *sure*, *shuah*.
>
> Elizabeth Kilham, *Sketches in Color*. Putnam's Magazine, Jan., *1870*, 15:37. An account of a white schoolteacher's difficulties in teaching black children after the Civil War.

Introduction

Academic paroxysms concerning the problem of Black American English (BAE) confront us on all sides in the literature. The problem is evidenced in simple observations that the black child in American classrooms is not accomplishing the goals the institutional structure has set for him. Many of these failures are attributed to language difficulties. The difference between BAE and Standard American English (SAE) can be proved empirically and some studies in this area (cf. Labov, 1968) have produced a range of opinions in regard to the status of BAE in schools. Clark (1970:11) proposes that BAE should be extinguished in *white* schools and SAE should be routed from *black* schools. Englemann (1968:529) suggests the use of both language forms in some manner in black schools, and by all inhabitants of the U. S. (1968:531).

The status of BAE is viewed varyingly throughout the literature--as a separate language, as a dialect of SAE, as a deficient form of language because of "ungrammaticality," as superior to SAE or as cognitively advantageous in comparison with SAE, and vice-versa. Most of the viewpoints have stemmed from a series of preconceptions about language in general or from humanistic considerations.

It is my purpose here to discuss some of these preconceptions and their consequences and to approach the problem of BAE from a historico-functional standpoint--heretofore undiscussed and unmentioned.[1] It is also my intention to discuss and attempt to explain some of the difficulties and problems of learning which black children encounter in the classroom. The preconceptions are discussed in the following order: 1) Language Bias, 2) Social Pathology, 3) Synchronic Bias, 4) Confusion of Science and Ideology, 5) The Fear of Racist Genetics.

Language Bias. It is generally felt by most English speakers that deviations from some norm of speech is undesirable. This has been adequately discussed by Englemann (1968:524-31). This bias has been carried over, however, into the social sciences where it has been assumed that speakers of such "deviant" forms of language are prevented from viewing the whole world because of their communication patterns. In a discussion on this subject Conger, Kagan, and Mussen (1969:315) state,

> For preschool children, cultural deprivation or disadvantage results in definite deficiencies in language and in cognitive function which is closely dependent on language. The deficiencies appear to be attributable at least in part, to inadequate stimulation and the relative paucity of verbal interaction in lower class homes, and, as noted earlier the impairments are likely to become more marked as the child grows older.

The authors quoted above have placed language as one of the chief agents of cognitive development and hence cognition and language are intimately linked (p. 310). Yet, the same authors define cognition as "the process by which knowledge is acquired and utilized" (p. 281). There is no doubt that a black child acquires and utilizes knowledge from his own environment, yet this process is little known (Ward, 1969). Similarly, no type of testing has been yet developed which can measure the ability to receive information from the environment by using language in general and BAE in particular. Thus, in the social sciences, there is a bias prevalent against Black American English which essentially maintains that Blacks are linguistically and hence cognitively deficient.

Social Pathology Bias. According to this viewpoint, deviations from Standard American Culture (including language) represent a perversion or a deficiency. Consequently, remedial measures are warranted (termed intervention programs by Baratz and Baratz, 1970).

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[1] Some of these dimensions have been discussed separately in the literature from time to time but they have never been placed in an integrated framework.

This bias has produced the Moynihan Report and other intervention programs such as Head Start. As Valentine (1969) has pointed out, "It is either brain damage or no Father: The False Issues of Deficit vs. Difference, Models of Afro-American Behavior." Such a preconception is supported by another misconception--namely, "inadequate socialization process among blacks in America" (Valentine, 1969). Baratz and Baratz (1970:36-41) have adequately documented this bias under the category of The Inadequate Mother Hypothesis. As they point out, such a hypothesis rests on an inadequate belief that the black mother's behavior produces deficit children. But this in turn rests upon an underlying assumption that only a very narrow range of socialization processes is capable of producing wholesome American children.

Furthermore, such misconceptions are bolstered in recent years by the observation that children reared in institutions are cognitively deficient when compared to those reared in "normal" households (Brodbeck and Irwin, 1946:145-65 among others).

Synchronic Bias. Remedial measures proposed due to social pathology have resulted into programs of instant improvement of black culture and black language. Such programs deal with "altering the child's home environment, most particularly with changing the pattern of child-rearing within the . . . home" (Baratz and Baratz, 1970:30) and improving his language and learning abilities. Such programs are based usually on the synchronic information available for black culture and no attention is paid to the historical factors that produced it. Herskovits (1938:39-112), quoted in Baratz and Baratz, (1970:31-32), made pleas for the recognition of the historical background of Black Americans as regards their African origins but few people paid heed to this plea. Equally important, the development of the black family structure and BAE during slavery and post-slavery times has hardly been investigated.

Rather, research on the black in America has been guided by the "ethnocentric liberal ideology which denies cultural differences and thus acts against the best interests of the people it wishes to understand and eventually help" (Baratz and Baratz, 1970:31).

Confusion between Humanistic Considerations and Analytic Considerations. Baratz and Baratz (1970:31-32) have discussed this bias in detail wherein they state that social scientists are unable to divorce themselves from "ideological considerations when discussing contemporary race relations." Such a confusion leads to inadequate examination and opinions about black culture and BAE. The overriding criterion in the investigation of blacks by social scientists is the welfare of the former. BAE and SAE are evaluated altruistically rather than from their internal structures and their functions in their respective societies. Furthermore, humanistic considerations are given the stamp of scientific conclusions. As Killian (1968:54, quoted in Baratz and Baratz 1970:31-32) has pointed out with reference to the role of social science after the 1954 Supreme Court decision,

> Because of their professional judgment that the theories are valid and because of the egalitarian and humanitarian methods of the social sciences, many sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists played the dual role of scientists and ideologists with force and conviction. Without gainsaying the validity of the conclusions that segregation is psychologically harmful to its victims, it must be recognized that the typically skeptical, even querulous attitude of scientists toward each other's work was largely suspended on this case.

Further, Baratz and Baratz (1970:31-33) state,

> Social science research with Negro groups has been postulated on an idealized norm of "American Behavior" against which all behavior is measured. This norm is defined iperationally in terms of the way middle-class America is supposed to behave. The normative view .coincides with current social ideology--the egalitarian principle--which asserts that all people are created equal under the law and must be treated as such from a moral and political point of view. The normative view, however, wrongly equates equality with sameness. The application of this misinterpreted egalitarian principle to social science data has often left the investigator with the unwelcome task of describing Negro behavior not as it is, but rather as it deviates from the normative system defined by the white middle class. The postulation of such a norm in place of legitimate Negro values or life ways has gained ascendance because of the pervasive assumptions that (a) to be different from whites is to be inferior and (b) that there is no such thing as Negro culture. Thus we find Glazer and Moynihan (1963) stating: "The Negro is only an American and nothing else. He has no values and culture to guard and protect."
>
> Billingsly has taken sharp objection to the Glazer and Moynihan statement pointing out: "The implications of the Glazer-Moynihan view of the Negro experience is far-reaching. To say that a people have no culture is to say that they have no common history (italics mine, MD) which has shaped them and taught them. And to deny the history of a people is to deny their humanity." However, the total denial of Negro culture is consonant with the melting-pot mythology and it stems from a very narrow conceptualization of culture by non-anthropologists.

The Fear of Racist Genetics Bias. While there are still persons who advocate cultural differences between races (including linguistic ones) on a genetic basis, generally social scientists refrain from this standpoint. However, in an attempt to overcome a racist bias they have gone so far in the other direction that it is now impossible to introduce some issues which are not related to racist genetics lest they be wrongly interpreted as such. Jensen (1970) says,

> I indicated several lines of evidence that support my assertion that a genetic hypothesis is not unwarranted. The fact that we still have only inconclusive conclusions with respect to this hypothesis does not mean that the opposite of the hypothesis is true. Yet some social scientists speak as if this were the case and even publicly censured me for suggesting an alternative to purely environmental hypotheses of intelligence differences. Scientific investigation proceeds most effectively by means of what Platt has called "strong inference",which means pitting against one another alternative hypotheses that lead to different predictions, and then putting these predictions to an empirical test . . . The whole society will benefit most if scientists and educators treat these problems in the spirit of scientific inquiry rather than as battlefields upon which one or another preordained ideology may seemingly triumph.

Historical Aspects of BAE.

There are little factual data on the origins of BAE (Burling, 1970:122).[2] In the absence of such documentation we can only formulate by inference the origins of such a form of speech on the basis of our knowledge of historical change in language that occur under various conditions.

The first black slaves to the U.S. landed in Virginia in 1619 from a Dutch warship (Meltzer, 1964:1:1). By 1936 we have accounts of BAE--slave narratives by former slaves who were born as early as 1840 (Federal Writers Project: Slave Narratives). Presumably the BAE used in these narratives is the one spoken by blacks in the early part of the 19th century. Thus, very little is known about the period of 200 years which roughly encompass the time from 1619 to approximately 1819.

Certainly, communication occurred among the slaves in their native languages for some time. This can be attested in the account of a slave's capture in Africa (Meltzer, 1964:1:5-6).[3] This slave had been born and raised in Benin. Benin and the nearby states of Dahomey, Fogo, Gold Coast, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Guineas, Gabon, Angola, and elsewhere along the Atlantic coast of Africa were the formation sites of English and Portuguese based

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[2] There are undoubtedly a great number of unpublished documents available, especially in the southern U.S. which would give us insights into the process of its formation.

[3] The event described in Meltzer (1964) occurred around 1760 and the subject of the description--Olaudah Equinano or Gustavus Vassa--was born in Benin in 1745. He was 11 years old when kidnapped and sold into slavery. Four years later he was sold to traders and put on a slave ship bound for America.

Creole languages. Since this slave reported by Meltzer is reported to not have understood the language of his white masters on the ship which carried him to America we can conclude that he had not learned a Creole language based on English or Portuguese but rather that he was a monolingual speaker of some African language. Meltzer also reports that this slave spoke with other native speakers of his native language on the ship bound for America. Accordingly, we can assume that speakers of African languages with no knowledge of a European language or a European-based Creole continued to arrive in the U.S. until the abolition of slavery in 1808.

Since the first American flagship sailed out of Boston in 1645 in search of African slaves we can consider the period from 1645-1808 as the period of development of BAE. There are three important additional facts to be kept in view: 1) Apparently several slaves learned very early the fluent spoken language of their masters as attested by documents as early as the 1660's in Dutch and English (Aptheker, 1969:1-3); 2) Several slaves must have arrived during this time period speaking the Portuguese-based Creole languages which were prevalent on the Atlantic coast of Africa from Cape Verde to the Gold Coast (Valkhoff, 1966:51-76); 3) We can safely assume that very few slaves, owners or overseers in the southern U.S. had access to either a Portuguese or any other Creole language. Thus, during the formative period of BAE (1650-1800), we might reasonably expect to find on a large plantation slaves with the following types of linguistic competences:

1) Speakers of one or more indigenous African languages who knew no Romance or English based Creole language and because of the nature of their work (adult independent type of labor or caring for children) did not learn any form of English. Their verbal communication with others would always have been through the medium of an African language which would have been in great evidence at this period.

2) Speakers of one more indigenous African languages who had learned a Romance or English based Creole language before leaving Africa and continued to use this Creole without attempting to learn English. Speakers of this Creole would have widened the source of information by the help of translations from African languages to Creole and vice versa.

3) Speakers similar to 1) and 2) above with the exception that they were in varying states of knowledge of the English language. In this situation, they may have communicated with sentences which carried the structure of indigenous African languages, Romance based Creole, and nascent English. Undoubtedly, these individuals would have been in great demand as translators and may have received special favors from the overseers, thus making BAE a valued acquisition.

4) Speakers born in America who had no knowledge of the Romance based Creoles spoken in Africa and only a smattering of knowledge of an African language--perhaps enough for comprehension but not for production and whose native language was BAE.

5) Speakers born in America who knew only the then nascent BAE.

In addition, it is useful to note that in the old south of this time a great number of dialects were spoken by whites represented by white dandees, the Scot-Irish, Moravian Brothers, Lutheran peasants from North Germany, Hisland Scots, and the Yankees with a host of dialects (Cash, 1941:3-29).

In order to reconstruct the social mechanisms which give rise to pidgins, Creoles, decreolized forms, and BAE, the following historical periods are viewed as demarcating the eras giving rise to a change of social conditions of slaves.

TABLE I

Basic Periods in the Formation of BAE

Period I	The beginning of the arrival of large numbers of slaves from Africa	1650
Period II	The drying up of the slave trade due to abolitionist pressure	1800
Period III	End of the Civil War and Emancipation	1865
Period IV	Beginning of the Northern Migration	1935

These four periods can be viewed as being correlated with the following four states crucial in the development of BAE.

TABLE II

Stages in the Development of BAE

Period I	The Formative Period (influx of monolingual African 1650-1800 and Creole language speakers)
Period II	The Solidifying Period 1800-65
Period III	Expansions of the functions of BAE (1935-65)
Period IV	Exposure of the BAE to other English dialects and new functions in the society (1935-present)

That pidgin languages arise when speakers of different languages are forced to communicate (as during Period I above) can be attested countless times throughout the history of mankind (e.g., in times of warfare, for trading purposes, for travelling, slavery, etc.). Their life may range from a few hours to several centuries (e.g., Neo-Melanesian and Swahili) which, of course, is dependent upon the length of continued contact of the participants from the different languages involved. A pidgin is usually described as a reduction in phonology, syntax, semantics, and vocabulary (Hall, 1966:xii). The key idea behind a pidgin language is that the context of the communication is limited and is spoken by the participants as a second language--never as a first language. This further suggests that the first languages of the participants serves as a substatum model for the pidgin. The limited and well-defined purpose of such a communication process characterizes pidgin languages as being languages with a limited function in the lifeways of its participants. Hence, the concomitant reduction in phonology, syntax, semantics, and vocabulary can be correlated with the limited function.

A Creole language arises when a pidgin language is expanded in scope and becomes the native language of some speakers of a speech community (Hall, 1966:xii). The structural features exhibit more complex syntactic and phonological domains as compared to those domains in a pidgin language.

When African slaves first confronted their masters in the New World, the semantic domain about which they communicated must have been severely limited--centering around labor. The first generation of slaves born in the U.S. would have learned their parent's language--an indigenous African language as a first language. However, with more children born and reared in the U.S who would slowly build up a knowledge of the English lexicon for everyday affairs, the speakers of pidgins must have increased. The function of the communication between master and slave must have largely kept ot workaday affairs.

Within the next couple of generations the following conditions can be envisioned:

1) Parents of children in the fourth and fifth generation after arrival were using pidgin primarily and the usage of indigenous African languages was diminished because,

    a) slaves who learned to communicate in English were valued by whites and thus they influenced other slaves.

    b) slave children born and raised in America learned more and more English from house slaves and white children.

2) Newcomers from Africa who already knew some English-based Creole from Africa quickly adjusted to the pidgin developed in America.

By the beginning of Period II (end of 19th century) the above given factors slowly contributed to the development of a pidgin-Creole which was used by a high percentage of slaves in this country. Black English Creole served them for communicating with their masters and peers in the matter of daily life--work, sustenance, and family matters. One can envision that in areas such as religion, jokes, there must have been some use of African indigenous languages probably used ritually. The description of lifeways of slaves indicates that many semantic domains--legalized property rights, politics, formal education, economics (that were by definition denied to slaves) were not relevant to their life. We can assume that Black American Pidgin-Creole, not being used in these spheres, lacked specific lexicon to express these concepts.

Undoubtedly, the process outlined above suggests that Black American Creole must have incorporated African idioms and vocabulary, Portuguese based syntactic structures and vocabularies, British and Colonial American idioms and vocabulary. Studies in bilingualism have suggested that the structures of the substratum languages influence the developing pidgins and Creoles in various degrees.

Thus, the various arguments as to the linguistic origins of BAE (i.e., African, Portuguese based Creole, British English, Southern American English) are not as important as the conditions in which it developed. They all must have played important roles which cannot be unravelled unless a greater number of documents come to light than are now extant. The important point to be noted is that the process represented in BAE by 1800 is the same which has occurred over and over in the world with the expansion of colonial powers (Valkhoff, 1966).

During Period III, the speakers of the indigenous African languages slowly decreased in number due to deaths since no new slaves were brought in after 1808. Slaves born in the U.S. heard African languages less and less. The domain of Black American Creole increased in the semantic areas where African languages once had been used, thus filling a lacuna. After 1865 there was little input coming in from the outside world. The records taken in 1936 from slaves born around 1865 are probably fairly good examples of BAE around 1865.

The Civil War and the subsequent emancipation of the slaves ushered in a new period for BAE. The cultural domain in which BAE was used kept expanding now to legalized private property, education, freedom, ownership, religion, personal economies. This implies that communication settings between whites and blacks included the expanded range of topics. The distance between SAE and BAE had to be compromised in order to allow mutual comprehension in a wider communication and semantic domain. The compromise could have involved either BAE or SAE. The odds against SAE changing are well-known: 1) SAE was long represented in writing, 2) SAE speakers were usually literate.

The notion of correct language and its implication in regard to the socialization process was so strong that a change of SAE towards BAE would be highly improbable, 3) BAE was a dialect of slaves and thus was suffering from a highly undesirable status, 4) BAE lacked precision and accuracy of expressing the newly acquired semantic domains while SAE had already been dealing with these domains for several hundred years. Thus, SAE (rather than BAE) was a better candidate to be a donor language during this period and BAE consequently must have undergone radical changes at this time.

The consequent influence of SAE on BAE would be exhibited in various sectors of language structure and in many forms. Vocabulary would be the most obvious index but syntax and phonology can hardly remain uninfluenced.[4] The approaching of Black American Creole to SAE is a process of decreolization and relexification and it is this process in the face of ever-widening functions and usage which produces BAE.

The final period from 1935-70 saw the great black migration from the rural south to the urban north. Here, various dialects of BAE were thrown together in the ghettos expanding the domain of BAE at a personal level. Furthermore, the various BAE dialects ran headlong into new and different dialects of SAE. Again, the black people's comprehension of SAE had to be enlarged in order to cope with this new situation. As a result of the northern migration more and more blacks were crowded in ghettos. The place of black vs. white in the social hierarchy has determined the role of BAE in a subtle way. Homes, shopping centers, street, and places of entertainment in the ghetto do exhibit BAE but until the last couple of decades, BAE was never utilized in the executive offices of General Motors or Ford, in the political limelight (except in mockery), the universities, courts (except in lawyer-client relationships), which indicates that many sectors of the life-style in America where SAE is spoken, one cannot hear BAE.

In summary, the cultural domains in which BAE functioned as a form of communication has consistently expanded since 1619. This expansion has taken us through the processes of pidginization, creolization, and de-creolization with the requisite accompanying semantic grammatical, phonological and lexical expansions. However, just as the emancipation of slaves has not resulted in a complete integration of the black community with the white, we can readily see that the change of Black American Creole towards SAE did not result into its absorption with SAE but remains a distinct form of speech of an identifiable social group.

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[4] The ideal evidence for such an explanation would be the comparison between BAE spoken before 1865 and the one spoken around 1935. This would necessitate linguistic texts which are not available. But the offered hypotheses are based on linking historical events that have affected the Black community from the period of arrival in this country up to the middle of this century. It is assumed on what we know of the developments of Pidgin and Creole language that we had a concomitant change from a "slave" language to present-day BAE.

In the future, whether BAE merges with SAE (i.e., it can be decreolized and its functions expanded to the point where it disappears or merges with SAE) or remains a separate entity--as a dialect, or as a separate unintelligible language from SAE--is highly dependent upon the nature of communication that will later develop between whites and blacks.

Synchronic Functions

In the last section, it was briefly demonstrated how the functions of BAE have slowly expanded over a 350 year period. Whereas in the previous section the functions of BAE were viewed diachronically, I will attempt in this section to view the functions of BAE synchronically. My purpose here is to show that the expanded functional scope of BAE is still limited when compared to that SAE and it does not operate in all environments of the society which surrounds it. Furthermore, I aim to show that this limited functional domain of BAE is correlated with less complexity of the structure of BAE.[5]

BAE Structure. The most thorough study of the structural differences between BAE and SAE has been carried on by Labov et al. (1968, I, II) for New York Blacks. The following discussion and notes on BAE structure are adapted from this work.

1. Syllable simplification. Complex syllables tend to be less complex in BAE when compared to SAE by a simplification of consonant clusters: CVC becomes CV; CVCC becomes CVC; CVCVCC becomes CVCVC. Syllable simplication is not a phenonenon which is peculair to a creolization process. It occurs in the history of many languages. However, it is characteristic of Creole languages, especially when it is directly involved in grammatical processes. Labov et al. (1968:I, 124) say,

> In general, we will find that consonant cluster simplification is a phonological process which intersects with grammatical processes and the general rule which governs simplification can only be written when these grammatical forms are accurately known.

Hall (1966:31-32) also notes consonant simplification as a salient feature in pidgin and Creole languages.

2. Phonemic mergers. Another feature of pidgin and Creole languages is the merging of phonemes that are distinct in the source language. In present BAE / / and / / become /f/ and /v/ respectively in BAE, e.g., tuf for tooth. This phenomenon occurs medially too, though less frequently. As Labov et al. (1968) have repeatedly pointed out, these mergers do not hold for all speakers on all occasions. In initial position / / and / / are merged with /t/ and /d/: e.g., tink for think; der for there. /r/ is lost in some positions.

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[5] A higher goal would be to demonstrate how the absence of a particular function precludes the necessity for particular grammatical structure but that is not possible within the realm of linguistics at this time.

While the phonemes / / and / /, /r/ /f/, /v/ must be included in the phonology of both BAE and SAE, their status is not nearly as stable in BAE as in SAE.

3. *Morphological simplification*. The status of the suffix -ed indicating past tense is considerably weak in BAE though the semantic category of *past* is present. The point is that in BAE when the addition of a past tense suffix produces *-CC* in word-final position, the process of syllable simplification given above allows the elimination of the second *C* which is the past tense marker, e.g., *kept* becomes *kep*.

Generally when a language has gone through a creolizing process and carries as many fields of semantics as BAE presently does, a new structure will emerge which produces a surface structure manifestation of the semantic categories in question. This process has occurred in Scots English but has not occurred in BAE (Labov, 1968:1:15). Such a restructuring has taken place for the plural, however, in both BAE and Jamaican Creole.

A class of words which are marked for plural overtly in SAE occur with zero plural in BAE. On the other hand, an associative plural is found in BAE but not in SAE. This is an example of restructuring which one ordinarily expects in the creolization process.

There is no third person singular marker on verbs in BAE, though there are many cases of hypercorrection for the plural which occur on non-finite forms of verbs.

The usage of the possessive suffix is very limited in BAE, but the semantic category of possessive is quite strong. Except for an attributive possessive, BAE has not restructured itself sufficiently to bring out another surface structure manifestation of the nearly absent possessive suffix.

The copula has been restructured in BAE as in Jamaican Creole. In the following environments, there is no copula in BAE: 1) before noun phrases, 2) before predicate adjectives, 3) before locative phrases, 4) before present participles, and 5) before reduced forms of SAE *going to*. On the other hand, Labov et al. (1968, 1:228-237) have analyzed two structural copula for BAE which operate in different semantic environments. *Have* occurs much less frequently in BAE than in SAE.

4. *Syntatic reduction*. No person agreement occurs in the frequently used verbs such as *have*, *do*, *was*, and *say* in BAE (see the lack of 3rd person agreement mentioned above).

The perfect forms are not clearly distinct from the preterit forms in BAE.

Double negation exists in BAE. If this phenomenon is viewed in fact as concord, it represents the application of a less number of rules.

Labov et al. (1968, 1: 90) suggest that the structure of interrogative sentences in BAE is less complex than SAE.

The above comments only serve to point out some of the gross differences between SAE and BAE in order to illustrate less complexity in the overall structure of BAE compared to SAE.[6]

Compare these reductions with those found in Jamaican Creole.

TABLE III

SAE, BAE and Jamaican Creole Compared in Terms of Reductions

SAE	BAE	Jamaican Creole
past Present	partially present	absent
plural present	partially present	absent
possessive present	limited present	absent
copula present	absent	absent
(adj.pred.)		
(equaling) present	absent	present
(verb pred.) present	absent	absent
(verb locative)present	absent	absent

The above comments warrant some discussion about the correlation between structure and function of language. Synchronically, the structural reductions presented under 3.0 can hardly be shown in a one-to-one relation with a restricted function. The number of situations in which a given language utilizes the varities of topics with which it deals, the range of significant social distinctions of the participants it covers is defined here as a part of the functional domain of the language along with the expression of the psychological functions-motivations, moods, attitudes, etc.--which language performs. Apart from the purely transmitting of intended messages, language is used to convey the information of the functional domain (Hymes, 1964, Gumperz and Humes, 1964, 1970). The study of how the information about the setting, the participants, the topics, the situations, the motivations, the needs, the moods, etc. are incorporated into a language has only begun to be investigated in the last two decades under the rubric of sociolinguistics and the enthnography of communication. Phonology, syntax, and semantics, all three of these aspects of structure exhibit varying influences of sociolinguistic factors. The more varied and diverse the range of sociolinguistic domains in which a language is used, the more diverse and varied are the structural manifestations to convey it. Hymes (1964a) provides various examples. In this sense one may suspect that the BAE used by the black community for routine functions of family life in a limited set of surrounding has a more restricted functional domain than of SAE which is used for routine functions of family life plus various specialized functions in the community--formal knowledge, economic problems, political life, the integration of traditions with philosophy and religion, international relations, formal education, etc.

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[6] It should be noted, that there may be other speech forms in the U.S. that are comparable in complexity to BAE.

It is to be noted that any individual speaker of the English language may participate in situations that represent only a fraction of the total functional domain of a language. Consequently, he would use limited sets of structural possibilities. The difference between the function of BAE and SAE can be better understood by taking into account the totality of their functional domains. Any specific event of verbal communication--of BAE or SAE--represents individually a limited function, that is, whether making a decision at the presidential level, talking to a three year old, discussing solid state physics, an art form, or exchanging a recipe taken singly are examples of restricted functions and represent restricted structural possibilities. Since speakers of a language participate usually in a limited functional domain, the varieties of vocabulary and constructions they use is limited. For this reason, we must divorce a language from its speakers while examining the structural-functional aspects of a language.

By divorcing language from its speakers we avoid the envidious argument that the speakers of BAE are cognitively deficient as compared to speakers of SAE. Furthermore, the latent competence of BAE speakers for SAE or vice-versa would serve as a red light for those who are interested in cognitive consequences of a restricted structure. The situations given below would exemplify the depth of the problem:

1) A Black business man may speak SAE in his office and BAE with his family.

2) A Black person may not speak SAE but come in contact with it daily, understands it, and responds to it.

3) Most white persons understand nothing of BAE nor can they produce it.

The above points can be explored by analyzing the conditions of the breakdown of communication when a black and white meet. The difference in the organization of the cognitive categories manifested in their respective languages would be one of the areas where communication between two speakers would break down. Further, studies of this kind can enhance our understanding of the differences which are to be found in the communication patterns between blacks and whites.

Evaluating the Participation of a Black Child in the School

Apart from the conflict of BAE and SAE stemming from diachronic and synchronic factors as discussed above, there is an additional factor one should take into account, namely the linguistic socialization process of black children. Equally important and as neglected by social scientists who investigate the socialization process are various sorts of inputs in regards to language, as given below:

1) The attitude of adults towards children as verbal participants in the society, 2) the amount and type (verbal vs. nonverbal) of participation by children in the adult communication network as opposed to a child's peer group network, 3) the attitudes which children manifest about themselves as participants in the adult communication network; and 4) the identification of communication systems by which a child gathers information about his environment, his culture, and his subculture by the age of four or so (i.e., at about the same age when he is in possession of the complete grammar of the language and dialect he speaks). For the purpose of brevity let us refer to the above points as the "language diet" of the child (Ward, 1969). The types, kinds, and quantity of linguistic exposure a child has, is a manifestation of the parents' attitudes about the child as a linguistic participant and will condition the child's attitude about himself as a participant in the communication network of the society. If we examine the better known works on the socialization process (Rohrer and Edmonson, 1964, Mead, 1928) we find no direct reference to the problem of "language diet" but rather indirect references which are placed in no particular methodological and theoretical framework and thus they tend to be anecdotal for the most part. Let us imagine that we could have before us a taxonomic array of "language diets" around the world such that we could comprehend the entire spectrum and subsequently place a given society's attitudes toward children and communication on the spectrum. This would be helpful in comparing and contrasting language diets in various segments of a society.

In order to imagine such an array we need to know various components which will be manifested in each "language diet". At present, we do not have much information about such components and their interrelations. Table IV is given in an attempt to represent such components and their interrelations.

TABLE IV

Components and Their Interrelations in a Child's "Language Diet"

1. Participants	child-child, adult-child, adult-adult
2. Mode	verbal, non-verval (kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics, etc.)
3. Quantity	very extensive to very limited
4. Code	child language, standard language, jargon, slang, bilingualism, etc.
5. Purpose	disciplinary, expressive, manipulative, instructional, etc.
6. Role	listener, speaker, or both
7. Setting	home, religious, ceremonial, etc.

Various combinations of these seven components can form numerous communication sets (situations). It is to be noted that due to a lack of specific investigation in this area of research we know very little about different factors influencing these components. However, it may be useful to look at the socialization processin in two hypothetical communities which represent polar extremes and then attempt to locate the socialization of black and white children on axes connecting these extremes.

Hypothetical Community A. In this community we find that parents look upon children from the age of 2-3 onward as full participants in the total communication network of the community. If a child interrupts a group of adults he is given the same respect as another adult. In fact, he may be rewarded for verbally interrupting adults. All adult attention (verbal and otherwise) may focus upon him for a moment. He is equally encouraged to interact in the communication network of his peers. He will be scolded, on the other hand, if he sits alone and interacts with no one since shyness and quietness are low-esteem personality characteristics in this society. He is in short, encouraged to carry on intensive communicative interaction (particularly verbal) with adults in the community, his own peer group, and with strangers as well. The child is rarely rewarded for communicative kinesic behavior (such as dancing or facial gestures)though he is generally not punished for such behavior either. He has complete access to adult conversation constantly while he plays with his peer group since the family is either joint or extended and a great number of relatives and friends are constantly passing through the household. Each person picks him up from time to time and plays various sorts of verbal games which test his knowledge of the culture or subculture. Some of these games involve "phatic communion" (Malinowski, 1956). When he asks a question he is given an immediate favorable response which is rewarding. The responses are rewarding in that they are lengthy and explanatory expecially if the response happens to be one of the rare denials of his wishes. If he sees a bird and comments on it, any adult present will elaborate upon his comment purposefully enploying a wide display of syntactic forms,lexical items, and semantic structures. The child is included in all social events of the community as an active participator. By the age of puberty he is in complete possession of the knowledge of his environment as expressed by his culture and sub-culture. In short, the adults of this society would be considered permissive and consider themselves to have the responsibility of "teaching" the child his language which they take very seriously. We could sum up their beliefs about language and knowledge acquisition as "Folk-Skinnerism."

Hypothetical Community B. In this community by the age of three, a child is expected to "know better" than to interrupt adults in conversation. If he does interrupt either verbally or non-verbally, alone or with his peer group, he is punished by repeated verbal harangues, by being removed from the adult situation or occasionally by corporal punishment. Likewise, at any time when he interacts too verbally with his peer group he is punished. He has very little access to adult communication networks and only limited access to communication with his own peer group. The family is nuclear and when relatives or friends visit the home the child is usually put to bed because he "starts acting up" (usually verbal). When he asks a question he usually gets a one-syllable response which is negative and sometimes personally derogatory. His comments on the environment are ignored by adults. The child is rarely included in social events of the parents or the community and then only under restrained conditions. His rewards come from being quiet which is equivalent to being good.

The adults of the society do not consider the child as a participator in communicative networks because he does not yet know how to communicate properly. Children are also basically noisy and bad and do not "make sense." In spite of this the adults are fully confident that the child will acquire his language and be able to function fully in his society by the onset of puberty. Around this age the child begins to take on adult responsibilities and perceptibly moves into the adult communication network. We could label adults of this society as "fold-rationalists" since the participants believe that children will acquire their language and the cultural requisite knowledge about the environment independent of any teaching.

We have no evidence of any society which conforms to these polarities but the two following examples are on the continuum between these two extremes. Each soceity contains elements of the examples given below. The information for children in the black community is primarily drawn from Ward's (1969) study. The information for white children is drawn from sources cited in the bibliography and my own observations.

Socialization of the Black Child. The child in black society in America up to the age of puberty is not considered a viable participant in adult communication networks. He carries on intensive communication acts (both verbal and nonverbal) with his peer group. He is generally not punished for this unless it interferes with an adult communication situation. He has total access to the adult communication system as long as he does not seriously disrupt it. The entire set of information about his physical and cultural environment is available to him as he either observes adults interacting or interacts (relatively quietly in the presence of adults) with his peer group. His questions are frequently responded to with an automatic negative which carry overtones of disapproval of his having spoken in the first place. Little or no explanation is given by the adults in conjunction with negative replies. His comments on the environment are ignored. He is rarely without adults in his environment because of crowded living conditions and the composition of the family. He hears adults speaking at night after the family has retired while he sleeps in the same room with his parents, other adults and his peer group. His rewards come in being quiet (i.e., good), in communicating kinesically (dancing, etc.), in proxemics (close body contact with parents and peer group), and in successfully participating in verbal games (highly phatic communion) which demonstrate his knowledge of the culture from time to time. The main requirement upon him is that he should not attempt to communicate with adults because discipline is quick in coming since it is well known that "dem chirren is mean and noisy," "dem chirren ain' no good, dey allus be talking." To an outside white observer (Ward, 1969 from which most of the above statements are drawn), the case appeared to be the opposite: Children rarely said anything to adults and could not be coaxed (under special situations only) to utter a syllable. In summary, black parents in America consider that their children should "be seen and not heard", that they will eventually learn the language and function adequately in the subculture. There is no evidence to the contrary. The child is apparently able to do this by participating as hearer in adult communications which gives him access to the information required.

Socialization of Middle-class White Child in America. The newborn child in white middle-class America comes to his parents *tabula rasa*. It is the duty, responsibility, and obligation of his parents to teach him to speak and furthermore to speak properly. By the age of four months the father is engaged in teaching him "dada" and mother is working on "mama". He acquires his knowledge through his parents' diligence at about the same time as the black child does. Each vocalization is rewarded with smiles and parental repetition. He is constantly praised for his verbal behavior. Little reward is given for non-verbal behavior such as dancing, body movements or facial gestures after the age of four or so. White researchers noted (Mussen, et al., 1969:208-239) that babies who are rewarded by a smile after each vocalization tend to vocalize more than those who are not rewarded. Lengthy explanations are given to questions, especially to "why" explanation and to questions where a negative reply is required. Each monosyllabic comment of the child is elaborated upon, especially by the mother, as shown in the words of Brown and Bellugi (1964).

The child in the middle-class white society is effectively cut off from being able to observe the interaction of other adults with his parents. The family is nuclear. There are few relatives around and when they visit, the opportunity to observe them in interaction with the parents is limited because of structured activities such as naps, going on walks, or shopping trips. The parents' peer group is eliminated because the child is put to bed before the guests arrive for a cocktail party, bridge party, or a dinner party. He does not attend social functions such as concerts or even church with his parents until he is much older. Even children with siblings are put alone in their own room if the space of the house permits it. The child intensifies the syntactic patterns he has caught during the day by endlessly repeating and elaborating on them in much the same way mother elaborates on his speech while he is awake (Weir, 1962). He never sleeps with his parents, never with other adults. The child is encouraged to communicate with his peer group but in a relatively restrained way at all times (politeness, being nice, no smart talking, etc.) in the early years. By the onset of puberty this interaction becomes intense in quantity, model, code, function and participation.

In summary, the white American middle-class child is "taught" his language and his subculture by intense verbal interaction with his parents. At the onset of puberty he transfers this intense interaction to his peer group by leaving the parents to carry on their intense interaction with their own peer group.

The Communication Pattern in Schools. By examining the public school system which attempts to "educate" the children from such different backgrounds of communication patterns from the age of five onwards, I have abstracted the following features. The composition of the education process in America is monolithic:

1) Usually one female teacher presents the material to be learned.

2) The teacher's main technique for presentation is through verbal reward. If a child is verbally active as regards the lesson he is rewarded verbally and highly praised to other students, other teachers and to his parents. He goes on to become a good student since his "level of motivation is quite high."

3) The content of the lesson is explained to children through language in great detail. The children are expected to disgorge the material in equally great detail. The greater the detail the higher the verbal rewards.

4) Patience, good manners and always keeping the children first in mind are the keynotes to successful teaching because children can only learn by careful, patient, and detailed communication directed at tham.

In short, the public school teaching techniques in America are directly analogous to the Middle-class American socialization process. The teacher acts and behaves as regards verbal behavior and learning exactly as a white middle-class parent does as regards language learning. She teaches the children reading and mathematics in a fashion similar to the way the parents taught the child his language. The point is, of course, the middle-class white children learn their language and reading in spite of their parents and teachers.

What happens to a black child who enters into such a public school system? One would expect that black children accustomed to acquiring their knowledge about the world by listening to groups of adults would be confused by black teachers, educated in "white educational institutions" attempting to teach by means of complex and detailed verbal explanations modeled on the white socialization pattern. However, as described below, the case turns out to be different.

According to my own observations, black teachers ofter interacted with black children as though the children's mothers had left them in the teachers' homes for a day. The following features were noted as outstanding:

1) One teacher presented the material to be learned.

2) Rather than verbal reward for satisfactory verbal answers to children, the more recurrent technique was verbal punishment--e.g., raising of the voice to a high pitch, continued shouted repetition of commands and questions--to indicate dissatisfaction with the children's verbal behavior. Lengthy, soft-spoken, polite explanations and kind verbal rewards were absent. Instead, threat, ridicule, and verbal force were predominant. These verbal activities are very similar to the verbal interaction pattern we find in a black home. While the above can be compared to the black home, the crucial part missing in this verbal interaction was a group of adults engaged in verbal interaction. That is, the situation is complete for learning except for a medium to present the content of the lesson.

In summary, it can be fairly stated that the public school system in America is basically modeled on the socialization pattern of middle-class whites especially in the area of the presentation of lesson content. There is no latitude for ethnic groups whose children are accustomed to acquiring their knowledge about their environment under situations different from those of white middle-class America. The overall conclusions are given as follows:

1) BAE has had a peculiar history such that it is still functionally and structurally limited.

2) Black children are socialized differently as regards the acquisition of language than middle-class white children are.

3) Blacks and their children possess the requisite level of cognitive abilities (intelligence) as any other group to carry on their culture. This is evidenced by the fact that they acquire all the knowledge about their relevant environment necessary to function as an individual within his culture.

4) White middle-class children can adapt easily to the American school system because the system is a direct continuation of their prior as regards learning a language, whereas the American school represents an interruption of a black child's prior socialization pattern. According to my knowledge, there is no insitutionalized socialization process available to black children in the U.S. which can be seen as a continuation of their preschool experiences especially in regard to verbal interaction.

5) The problem which confronts Black children in the American school system is characteristically a communication problem, not just a language problem; a communication problem involves the usage of language, not just the structure of a language.

6) Black children's failure to adapt to the American school system is interpreted by many educators and social scientists as some type of inferiority, i.e., inferiority in intelligence, in the socialization process, or in the structure of BAE. A great part of the difficulties in correcting the above situation lies in the recalcitrance of educators to recognize different types of language acquisition patterns and to establish an educational process that is coordinated with the language acquisition pattern of blacks rather than one which conflicts with it.

Recommendations

1) An educational system must be created which takes maximum advantage of the black child's entire experience before he enters school. Since white Americans have the stamp of being chauvinistic and well-intentioned white-reformers, social scientists, and educators have the history of attempting to replace the black way of life by the white way, it is highly unlikely that now whites would be allowed by blacks to get at the heart of any black problem. The following recommendation is made in the light of this fact.

2) The only way in which a proper educational system as outlined in 1) above can be accomplished is by exposing young blacks in the field of education and the social sciences to the problems which have been outlined above. In addition they would be the prime gatherers and anlalysts of data from the ghettos after

   (a) having been exposed to the proper historical aspects of BAE,

   (b) the influence of different socialization processes on children,

   (c) how language functions in a society,

   (d) how the structures of languages adapt to the functions they are required to perform,

   (e) the role of different modes of communication in transmitting and receiving information. In short, all research on the problem should be done by blacks and whites should either refrain or be restrained from doing further research on the problem.

This is especially true when we note that all products of such research up to this point has essentially resulted in intervention programs for blacks and promotions for the white researchers. The particular way in which white academic researchers, the academic community at large, social scientists, educators, etc. can help is by focusing research upon these problems in a general framework, but always with black students who gather and analyze the data.

The solution outlined above is based upon the depth of information available to the black community (never available to the white) and is also aimed to prevent experiments on culture change and language change in the black community.

The following are a few ideas which could be incorporated in the educational system for black children:

1) Several black teachers and older black children in a classroom would recreate the home atmosphere of a child where many adults live.

2) The curriculum presented in the form of conversation rather than in the form of direct lengthy instructions. The suggested form would be congruent with the one used in acquiring information about their home environment.

3) In nursery school and kindergarten, BAE should be used freely. The shift from BAE to SAE can be gradual and at a later stage. The opportunity to use BAE should be always open to the student.

As stated above, however, these processes need to be defined and carried out by blacks since they are the ones who should be able to control the destiny of the black community. The degree of Black Nationalism or the degree of assimilation into the white community should be a decision which is made by blacks. A black student of mine in an Introductory Linguistics course recently wrote,

> With the advent of Black Pride, I
> think perhaps some black purposefully
> want to cling to their Black English
> because it will distinguish them as
> an ethnic group!
>
> Frances Chapman, 1971

We can only hope that these voices are heard as white social science pushes on with its own personal ambitions, intentions, and goals.

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Section 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations will center on the problems of black schools with the insistence that some of the problems of impoverished black schools are shared by all public schools.[1] We are intensely aware that the central problems of schools or the so-called "crisis in the classroom" cannot be solved until the problem of race, of economic inequities, of run-away technology, and over-bureaucratization are solved. We are also intensely aware that some of the palliative solutions we will discuss such as making the schools more humane, more open, less bureaucratic, less authoritarian, and more attuned to the children's immediate experiences may, as the current lingo goes, "cool" the youngsters out so that they will stay in school long enough to enter the mainstream of American society and help perpetuate, as their teachers before them, the continuing inequities. We are also intensely aware that some will remain in school, perhaps more than would otherwise should these changes occur, only then to enter a world in which there is no place for them, and, given the skills learned in school, will provide a cadre of rebellious spirits that will make whatever disruption that have occurred in this society thus far look tame.

But we have had to make a choice. In the black schools we have observed, the damage to the self-esteem and to the innate capacity of children's enjoyment of learning and discovering is irreparable. For many, school is not an opening up of opportunities but very clearly a closing out of options. However romantic it might be, we have opted to reduce the personal casualties. The children we have observed, and those that will come after them, can't wait for a more equitable system. Whatever the political consequences, we believe, for the present, that the schools must be made less miserable places for children. It is as simple as that. The schools we observed are miserable places for five, six and seven year old children to spend their days.

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[1] The recommendations which follow are the joint product of those who prepared this report. We have, therefore, with one exception, made no attempt to reference specific contributions. The exception is the recommendations on Black American English and language socialization which, while still a joint product, lean leavily on the work of Carol Talbert and Marshall Durbin.

Ideology of Failure

There are enough data now to say with some certainty that the expectation of failure is strongly related to the occurrence of failure.[2] In the schools we studied, expectation that large numbers of students would fail was pervasive and there are indications that this ideology has its counterpart in many other school systems with a high proportion of black teachers and black students.

These attitudes are obviously extraordinarily difficult to change when the reality supports them. Many black students do fail and drop out. How is it possible, then, to enter this vicious circle and if not change at least temper these attitudes, particularly as they operate in day-today interaction in the classroom?

One possibility is a massive educational program directed toward school personnel and teachers which clearly demonstrates those specific conditions, among them the expectation of success, that assure the same proportion of success or failure among black children as anyone else. This program might involve not only the documentation of research and materials already extant but also a series of demonstration projects utilizing a wide variety of situation, teaching and learning methods, and curriculum devices. While it is indeed possible that some such projects might fail to show some modicum of observed success, the data already at hand indicate otherwise.[3]

The Office of Education could play an important role in this endeavor. A highly publicized and widely distributed brochure outlining in plain language some of the factors that make a difference in the success and failure of black children in schools, especially those factors related to expectations, could go far toward tempering the ideology of failure. More cautious researchers will suggest we do not know enough yet. Our contention is that we do, if we assume that given comparable conditions a healthy black child can learn as well as a healthy white child.

We believe that the situation is so desperate in the ghetto schools that the Office of Education, in such a program, should not hesitate to utilize "soft" as well as "hard" data, particularly when some of the "hard" data are based on measures, such as I.Q. tests that are clearly ethno-centric.[4] It is difficult to see how the situation could be made worse by teaching teachers that, under certain conditions, especially that of the expectation of success, that a black child will fail no more often that a white child, even if some of the data are "soft."

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[2] See especially R. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, Pygmalion in the Classroom, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), for both an extensive review of the literature and a series of experiments.

[3] We are well aware that there are some demonstration projects that have "failed." It appears, however, that many of these "failures" can be attributed to misuse of funds, shortage of funds, the cutting off of funds before the project is completed, lack of follow-up programs, and vacillation between the media spotlight and oblivion.

Black American English

Our studies indicated that both black children and black teachers frequently used Black American English, although the use among the teachers tended to be limited to non-academic, casual contexts. Many of the children had difficulty learning Standard American English, or "textbook" language, and the ability to "code-switch" between Black American and Standard American English appeared to be an important criterion in the teacher's selection of "high" potential children.

The prejudice against Black American English can only be eliminated through recognition of its structure and grammar. We would suggest, therefore, that teachers (both black and white) of black children receive instruction in the grammar and semantics of Black English and that a handbook be written describing black grammar and its functional equivalents in Standard American English. This would, among other things, assist the teacher in helping the child make the transition to Standard American English and, especially, make the teacher aware that when, for example, the child says "Tip and Mitten was *goin'*" that this is not a random error but part of his natural grammar. It would also assist the teacher, whether black or white, in separating the *behavior* of the black child from the *language* of the black child and sensitize the teacher against making adverse judgments accordingly.

We also recommend that the curriculum increase the use of aural instructional modes (conversation, tape, audio-visual teaching) and encourage free expression in the child's own narrative syntax and thus capitalize on the rich aural tradition among blacks. We strongly recommend the use of narrative folk reading materials although since our experience has indicated that many Black American

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[4] Thus materials collated from Dennison, *The Lives of Children*, (1969); Levy, *Ghetto School* (1970); Kohl, *36 Children*, (1967); Kozol, *Death at An Early Age*, (1967), and many other such documents can be used along with the Coleman report and on Equality of Educational Opportunity (1966) and its replications and the 1967 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report, *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*. For a review of these studies is Thomas F. Pettigrew, Racially Separate *or Together*? (McGraw-Hill, 1971), Chapter 4, "Race and Education," pp. 51-83.

English speaking children are strongly motivated to learn Standard American English it does not appear necessary to write text books in black grammar.

The black child will not, as he becomes an adult, become either a white person or a speaker of only Standard American English. His use of Black American English, his natural language, will persist. The educational system must accept this, accept the existence of both grammars, while concentrating on helping the child master the language of the "majority."

There may be a gradual lessening of the differences between Black American English and Standard American English or there may be increasing differences through isolation of the two groups. It is not likely that the direction will be influenced either way by the educational system. The school cannot eliminate Black American English any more than it can eliminate black "culture." The educational system can, however, reduce the racist view of Black American English and Black American English speakers by an unbiased acceptance of the language.

"Language Diet"

Our preliminary studies have indicated that many black children are socialized into the use of language somewhat differently than some "middle-class" white children, tending to interact verbally more with siblings and peers than with adults and tending more often to be listeners to adult interaction. The schools, however, tend to be modeled after the more "middle-class" language acquisition patterns in which the adult assumes the role of the "teacher" and is concerned with "explaining" things to the child. The teacher as well as the parent "lectures" and asks children direct questions and gives direct explanations. It would seem incumbent on those who design curricula to attend more closely to the patterns of learning the child brings with him to the classroom and to build upon these rather than rely solely upon a curriculum typical of white "middle-class" mothering behavior.

It would be unrealistic for us to assume that the patterns some black children experience in the home could be duplicated in the schools. Nevertheless, some aspects of this learning pattern could be utilized. One untapped resource is the important role older siblings play in the education and protection of their younger siblings. Schools might make more use, for example, of older children teaching younger children, which of course often benefits the older children as well as the younger. There are numerous reports emerging in the literature indicating some success with older children supervising and teaching the younger: our researchers have frequently observed perseverance and patience of the older children with the younger.

There should also be more co-operative learning or group teaching rather than the traditional drill and recitation techniques. This might involve group projects that teach basic skills and at the same time build confidence in the child. Children are quite adept at correcting, informing and advising each other. Alvin D. Loving, the president of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has commented that the children often succeed by working together and "I don't care how big your classroom is. I've seen group teaching work with fifty kids in a classroom. The key is for the teacher to keep the kids busy and to inspire confidence."

We would also urge greater involvement of parents and various types of "paraprofessionals" in the classroom on a volunteer or part time basis. In this regard, we strongly urge the use of black (or white) men. Our research has indicated that boys seemed to have a "rougher time" of it than girls. There are no doubt many reasons for this--among them the fact that our schools are overly-feminized. The best solution would be to train more men--particularly black men--to teach at the elementary level. There are indications that some efforts are being made in this direction. Short of this we strongly urge that every effort be made to introduce men into the elementary classroom situation again on a "paraprofessional" basis. We recognize that particular aspects of black "manhood" may be odious to the educational scene, but would urge educators to be more accepting of cultural differences and not be "put-off" by aggressive language, covert hostility, and some non-communicativeness.

"Open" Schools

Our most basic recommendation is certainly not "our" recommendation nor does it apply only to black ghetto schools. It is a recommendation, sweeping in scope, that is dominant in reform circles today: while argued before, especially in the work of John Dewey, it has perhaps been most cogently stated for our time by Silberman in Crisis in the Classroom.[5] The recommendation, in essence, is that all our schools must become more humane and less "mindless." This reform movement has various names--the "informal" school, the "open" school, or the "free" school. The model is the new English primary schools. Their success is proof of the effectiveness of such schools. The basic truth is that children not only want to learn but will learn and the basic conviction is that learning is likely to be most effective if it grows out of what interests the learner, rather than what interests the teacher.[6] The role of the teacher, however, is critical. He plays a vital part in guiding the child and helping him sift his interests and make his choices.

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[5] Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, (Random House, 1970).

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

It is certainly not possible even to outline here the complexities (and the controversies) of this approach other than to note that it involves a much greater number of alternatives in curricula, and in classroom activities, more individualized work with children, and less emphasis on discipline and control than is present in most American schools. It is recognized that instituting these changes necessitates a vast rehauling of our educational system--the ideology, the school bureaucracies, teacher training, and, of course, parental involvement in education. We note, however, that it appears to have succeeded in England, and as Silberman has noted, and as many innovative and creative people have demonstrated in their own efforts toward developing "open" schools, it can and it has happened in the United States in a far more limited way. We note, too, that there is every evidence that such schools, which tend to capitalize on the energies and resources of the children, which insist on autonomy for teachers, and which have far less need for top heavy bureaucracies cost far less than our present schools.

Even without a great deal of retooling some of these reforms can be initiated in ghetto schools in a limited way almost immediately. As a beginning we suggest the following:

1. Give the teachers more autonomy in their classrooms: Teachers are trained to be professionals and regard themselves as professionals. Many end up being little more than a policeman for children and are often evaluated as such. And like policemen, teachers spend as much time filling out forms and paper shuffling as they spend doing the work they were hired to do. There should be a climate of freedom for the teachers to run, not "taut ships," but islands where children can be guided to learn the skills they need. If some methods don't work, the teacher should be allowed to try others. If some educational materials don't work, the teacher should be allowed to try others. Teachers should demand and get far greater independence in running their classrooms. Whatever bureaucratic details are thought absolutely necessary can be taken care of by clerks.

In return, (if there need be a "return"), the teachers should be put to the test. They should be hired and promoted and fired on one criterion only--that they can do the task expected of them. They certainly should not be hired and promoted and fired only on the basis of how many years of schooling they have completed.

2. Place less emphasis on discipline and control and more emphasis on providing children with a much greater variety of activities and curricula: If the amount of teacher energy that is now directed toward discipline and control were redirected toward planning and carrying out a broader spectrum of educational activities of intrinsic interest to the children, the difficulties created by the "disrupter," the "trouble maker," the "non-participant," the "withdrawn" and other assorted "problem" children would be diminished.

All of the observers on the project have testified to what they perceive as the severe authoritarianism of black teachers toward black children. Although the observers believe that this attitude tends to be more general among black than among white teachers, we have no data to support this position. White or black, however, the overwhelming emphasis on discipline should be brought out in the open and discussed. Is it really necessary, for example, that five and six and seven year old children be glued to their seats?

3. Give more individual attention to children and their differing rates and patterns of learning: This means, in part, that teachers must learn and be free to use a much greater variety of skills. Such skills must include those of teaching children the teacher regards as "unteachable." Many of the children we observed were not learning because no effort was made to teach them and, indeed, there were few attempts to even look for a way to teach them. The Office of Education can play a critical role in developing and disseminating methods of teaching those who do not fit the standard mold and helping teachers redefine their goals away from the singular emphasis on some form of standardized achievement.

If we take seriously the assumption that different children learn different things at different times it means that many kinds of activities will be going on in the classroom at the same time. Given large classrooms this is a highly demanding job fof the teacher. However, it is possible. Given a variety of activities for the children to explore while the teacher is not paying attention to them and given, as we suggest elsewhere, the very real possibility of older children in the schools teaching and working with the younger children and the help of paraprofessionals, parents, and volunteers it can and has been done even in large classrooms.

4. "Open up" the classroom: Learning is a dull and tedious task in the dreary isolated cubicles we call classrooms. It is not without reason that youngsters refer to schools as "prisons." Tear down some walls, combine some classes, allow access to libraries and other facilities, paint the rooms in bright colors, allow more freedom of movement, tolerate noise. The schools have to make a choice: either they are going to be caretakers or they are going to be places where there are opportunities for all children to learn.

Right now, we can take the school out of the classroom and into the community. We do not speak here of the occasional formal and mostly sterile so-called "field trips." We speak of very frequent exploration of the varieties of institutions and businesses that are close at hand and the ease with which such explorations can be related to more formal classroom activities. The list is as long as the teacher's imagination." Museums of all kinds, libraries, department stores, courts, city government offices, employment agencies, factories, parks, churches, universities, computer laboratories, book stores, welfare agencies, police and fire stations, electric and water works, open air markets, construction sites, farms, etc. Should many thousands of children spend hundreds and hundreds of hours sitting still with "your mouth shut" while the world goes on around them?

5. Capitalize on blackness: Educational critics have been talking for years about the imperatives of educational materials and activities attuned to the needs, interests and life of the children. We were astounded, therefore, to find in the black schools we studied the same old white, "middle-class" "Dick and Jane" variety of books, classroom discussion and display materials. There seems little doubt, for better or for worse, that we are going to have many all black schools for some time to come. "Dick and Jane" do not belong in black culture." It does not seem particularly innovative to suggest that some part of this "culture" be reflected in the things that children do in the classroom: in the books they read, in the songs they sing, in the things they look at, and in the topics they talk about. There should be no fear of materials related to black history, black consciousness, white and black racism, social classes or even to those institutions that are an intimate part of the children's lives such as caretaker agencies and the police. Our data indicate that the children are well aware of these things anyway which help to make the schools, for them, a strange and bewildering foreign land because the schools seem to assume that there is not a "black world" out there. And, of course, even if it should come to pass that our schools become integrated, there will still be black children and there is still a black history which the schools ignore at the risk of totally misrepresenting the realities of American society.

The [illegible] of the black teacher in our schools has been incredibly underestimated. While recognizing that black teachers in black schools have jobs which, as one despairing teacher noted, "you can't be paid enough," we would urge black teachers, as representatives of adults "being black" to the black child, to be particularly alert to, and aware of, the possibilities of their own class biases and racial prejudices. As models they are crucial to the black children they teach and, not without appreciating their own struggles, we ask them to be more sensitive, more accepting, and especially more loving of the children. The classrooms we studied had black teachers teaching black children, not white teachers teaching black children. It was black, not white, who helped perpetuate the self-fulfilling prophecy of failure we observed. Beleagured now, as all teachers are, in the current game of "get the teacher," it is not easy to suggest to black teachers that they may be faulted, in part, for the terrible failures of the ghetto schools. But they must be. Granted the oppressive and authoritarian bureaucracies of the schools, granted the slim autonomy of the teachers, granted the lack of support from the home, there is still no good reason that children should be early programmed for certain failure by their teachers. A black child might conceivably expect a white teacher to assume, even early, that he is a failure. That is the name of the game. But a black teacher?